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Cross Island Line's first phase to be completed by 2029

29km stretch from Changi to Sin Ming will have 12 stations – four of them interchanges

Christopher Tan
Senior Transport
Correspondent

The first phase of the Cross Island Line – Singapore's longest fully underground MRT line – will be completed by 2029 and span 12 stations from Changi to Sin Ming.

Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan said yesterday that the alignment of the 29km first phase has been finalised. When it is completed, more than 100,000 households will enjoy better access to the rail network and shorter travelling times.

Bright Hill, a station on the Thomson-East Coast Line, "will further expand to become an interchange station with the Cross Island Line".

Phase 1 will have three other interchanges – at Ang Mo Kio with the North-South Line, at Hougang with the North East Line and at Pasir Ris with the East-West Line.

The Cross Island Line, which links Jurong to Changi, will be Singapore's eighth MRT line. Mr Khaw revealed that its depot in Changi

East will be a surface depot and not underground as originally planned.

He also announced that the first stage of the Thomson-East Coast Line – a three-station stretch from Woodlands North to Woodlands South – will open before Christmas this year. The rest of the line will open in phases up till 2024.

The Cross Island Line is forecast to have an initial daily ridership of 600,000, and eventually one million, making it Singapore's most heavily used rail line.

Construction of Phase 1 will begin next year, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) said. Stations will be designed and built to accommodate eight-car trains, but the line will operate with six-car trains initially.

The stations are in Bright Hill, Teck Ghee, Ang Mo Kio, Tavistock (Serangoon Gardens), Serangoon North, Hougang, Defu, Tampines North, Pasir Ris, Pasir Ris East, Loyang and Aviation Park.

Mr Khaw said the entire Cross Island Line will support hubs outside the Central Business District "so that jobs are nearer homes". It will also redistribute passenger load on the North-South, East-West and North East lines "so that the overcrowdedness that our commuters experience now will be eased".

Mr Khaw added that the new line will give commuters "more journey options" and "improve the resilience of our rail network".

The Cross Island Line will pass

through Paya Lebar Air Base, which is slated to be relocated from 2030. An area of some 800ha will be freed up for residential and commercial developments. However, no station has been planned for this stretch.

The construction of Cross Island Line Phase 1 will involve eight properties being affected by partial acquisitions. They are Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery in Bright Hill, Ang Mo Kio Hub, Gain City Best-Electric and Daikin Airconditioning in Ang Mo Kio Industrial Park 2, Loyang Industrial Park, Hitachi Chemical in Loyang Way, an electrical substation in Loyang Avenue and Loyang Valley condominium.

The land affected will total 4,508 sq m, but no building on the properties will be affected and no relocation will be required.

The LTA said the Cross Island Line will be completed in three phases. No information was given about the other two stages, which involve the possibility of tunnelling beneath Bukit Timah Nature Reserve.

The line was to be ready by 2030, doubling Singapore's rail network to 360km and enabling 80 per cent of households to be within a 10-minute walk of a station.

Marketing professional Charissa He, 29, said she is happy that there will be a station in Serangoon North, where her future home will be.

She added that the Cross Island Line "is a good line, as it allows passengers to switch to other lines easily, and eases choke points".

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SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A14



CFC (NS) Aloysius Pang was accorded a homecoming ramp ceremony with the Chief of Army in attendance, a guard of honour and fellow soldiers of the artillery formation as his body arrived at Paya Lebar Air Base yesterday. PHOTO: MINDEF

Aloysius Pang's body flown home to S'pore

Actor Aloysius Pang was brought home yesterday, as the KC-135R tanker aircraft carrying his body arrived around 6pm at Paya Lebar Air Base.

Corporal First Class (NS) Pang, 28, was accorded a homecoming ramp ceremony with Chief of Army Goh Si Hou in attendance, a guard of honour and fellow soldiers of the artillery formation.

CFC Pang's family witnessed the

ceremony, said the Ministry of Defence, adding that he will be accorded military funeral honours and cremated at Mandai Crematorium tomorrow.

The actor died on Wednesday night from injuries suffered last Saturday during a military exercise in New Zealand. He was carrying out repair works inside a Singapore Self-Propelled Howitzer and suffered serious injuries to his

chest and abdomen when the gun barrel was lowered.

A public memorial will be held from noon today to noon tomorrow at 82A MacPherson Lane, following a private wake for the family this morning. Last night, hundreds of members of the public turned up at the wake, hoping to pay their respects.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A4&6

Stay united amid global headwinds: Heng

Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat has called on Singaporeans to stay united as the country faces rising global headwinds.

Speaking at the end of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos yesterday, he noted how there was a lot of anxiety in many countries because of globalisation and the fast pace of technological changes. In many parts of the

world, communities have fragmented, and this has had a negative impact on political systems.

To win votes, politicians make promises they cannot fulfil or which could hurt future generations, said Mr Heng, who had spent four days meeting world and business leaders.

At the sidelines of the forum, Singapore, together with Australia and Japan, hosted a meeting of World

Trade Organisation members to kickstart negotiations for rules governing e-commerce.

Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran noted that digital trade, including e-commerce, was one of the bright spots in the global economy, and the meeting will take the digital trade agenda forward.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A10

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10

must-reads for today

1 Bangkok air toxic: Study
The air in Bangkok is filled with heavy metals hazardous to public health, researchers have found, as the Thai capital struggles with smog. Studies show that at least 51 kinds of heavy metals were present in dust particles, of which cadmium, tungsten and arsenic were found to be at unsafe levels. **WORLD A18**



Bangkok residents wearing masks to protect themselves against the smog, which has been found to contain hazardous substances. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

2 Cross Island Line Phase 1
The alignment of the 29km first phase of the MRT Cross Island Line has been finalised, said Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan. Spanning 12 stations from Changi to Sin Ming, the first phase will be completed by 2029 and will give more than 100,000 households better access to the rail network and shorter travelling times. **TOP OF THE NEWS A1**

3 Halt in measures extended
Singapore and Malaysia have agreed to suspend the new Instrument Landing System at Seletar Airport and the restricted area over Pasir Gudang until March 31 while the two countries thrash out airspace issues. The two sides had on Jan 8 agreed to a one-month suspension of the measures. **TOP OF THE NEWS A13**

4 Brexit to impact UK unis
It would take decades for Britain to recover from the setback inflicted by uncertainties over Brexit, university leaders have warned. Statistics already flag a substantial drop in enrolment of European Union students. **WORLD A30**

5 Streaming pirated content
What lies behind the recent decision to ban Android media set-up boxes with "add-on" services that allow access to pirated content and how will it affect end-users? Senior tech correspondent Irene Tham (below) examines the legal implications. **OPINION A38**



6 Turn trash into treasure
The way forward to safeguard the future of Singapore and the region is to transform trash into resources. Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli said that by doing so, countries will be able to generate new economic value from something that would have been discarded. **HOME B4**

7 Petition over tribunal ruling
More than 4,000 people have signed a petition over a ruling by a Singapore Medical Council tribunal where a doctor was fined for not telling a patient about possible side effects from a commonly used injection. They are concerned the ruling would impose a significant additional burden on doctors that would, in turn, increase the time and cost of treatment. **HOME B10**

8 Call for more internships
The labour movement wants to see more internship opportunities for young people so they can have a leg up in their job search amid the uncertain business environment. **BUSINESS C2**

9 Shooter cool under fire
National shooter Martina Lindsay Veloso is still nine months away from turning 20, but she showed growing maturity and an uncanny ability to deliver under pressure when she won two gold medals at the Commonwealth Games last year. The Straits Times Athlete of the Year award nominee said: "To me, age is not a factor in shooting. It is more of a mental test." **SPORT C13**

10 Bauhaus marks 100 years
German design school Bauhaus celebrates its centenary this year. The school redefined artistic creativity and left its mark on everything from teapots to iPhones. **LIFE D6**

An apartment trailer in Berlin that is shaped like the workshop wing of the Bauhaus school building, to mark the school's centenary. PHOTO: EPA-EFE



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VIDEO
CrossFit granny
Age is no barrier for retiree Yeoh Kim Bee, who does CrossFit weekly. The 82-year-old says it makes her feel revitalised and full of vigour – and encourages other seniors to do it too. <http://str.sg/hipgranny>**PODCAST**
Life Picks
The recommendations this week include the new Chinese New Year dishes at Peranakan restaurant Folklore and the Digimuse exhibition at the National Museum of Singapore. <http://str.sg/lifepicks19>

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A large crowd of mourners outside the wake area last night. The public memorial for actor Aloysius Pang will be held at 82A MacPherson Lane from noon today to noon tomorrow. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO



Mr Pang's close friends and relatives paying their last respects at the wake last night, after his body was flown into Paya Lebar Air Base on a tanker aircraft in the evening. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

Hundreds turn up at wake for actor

People tear up as hearse arrives; public can pay last respects from today

Yip Wai Yee

Hundreds of people turned up at Singaporean actor Aloysius Pang's wake last night, hoping to pay their respects before the public memorial was due to start today.

After his management agency NoonTalk Media announced the location of the wake on social media yesterday afternoon, members of the public, including his fans, started streaming in to stand outside the barricaded multipurpose area in MacPherson Lane while the wake was being set up.

Some onlookers started tearing up when the hearse carrying the body arrived at 9.20pm.

Mr Pang's close actor friend Xu Bin, 29, and television host Quan Yi Fong, 44, sobbed uncontrollably.

The public was then asked to leave the area so that the late actor's family and friends could pay their respects in private.

An emcee said that members of the public who wished to say their personal goodbyes could come and do so from noon today.

A housewife who wanted to be known only as Mrs Lim, 59, tried to stuff condolence money into the hands of the organisers.

She started tearing up as she told The Straits Times that she "felt compelled" to turn up, even though she was not familiar with the actor's works.

She said: "As a mother, I can understand how heartbreaking this must be for his parents. He went to serve the country, and now he has died."

"I really hope that this ordeal will lead to real changes to how the authorities will handle the safety of our national servicemen. There have been too many deaths."

The death of Corporal First Class (NS) Pang is the fifth reported since September 2017, following four preceding years of zero training- and operations-related fatalities for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

CFC Pang, 28, died on Wednesday night from injuries suffered last Saturday while serving as an operationally ready national serviceman in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Defence said CFC Pang, who was with the 268th Battalion Singapore Artillery, had been



The body of actor Aloysius Pang arriving at 82A MacPherson Lane yesterday, where the wake is being held. The public was asked to leave the area so that the actor's family and friends could pay their respects in private. Corporal First Class (NS) Pang will be accorded the full honours of a military funeral, and the cremation ceremony will be held at the Mandai Crematorium tomorrow. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

carrying out repair work inside a Singapore Self-Propelled Howitzer when the gun barrel was lowered and injured him in the chest and abdominal areas.

He was evacuated to Waikato Hospital, a regional trauma centre in Hamilton, south of Auckland, where he underwent three operations in five days.

His body was flown into Paya Lebar Air Base on a Republic of Singapore Air Force KC-135R tanker aircraft yesterday evening.

CFC Pang was accorded due honours by the SAF at a homecoming ceremony with Chief of Army Goh Si Hou in attendance, a guard of honour and fellow soldiers of the artillery formation.

The ceremony was witnessed by the late actor's family, Mindef said

in a statement.

At the airbase, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen, accompanied by Chief of Defence Force Melvyn Ong, met a family member to offer the condolences of Mindef and the SAF.

Dr Ng also conveyed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's personal condolences to the family, and paid his respects.

The public memorial will be held at 82A MacPherson Lane from noon today to noon tomorrow.

CFC Pang will be accorded the full honours of a military funeral.

The cremation ceremony will be held at the Mandai Crematorium tomorrow.

yipwy@sph.com.sg

SEEFORUM B14



CFC Pang died on Wednesday night from injuries suffered last Saturday while repairing a howitzer in New Zealand. PHOTO: ALOYSIUS PANG/INSTAGRAM

ONE DEATH TOO MANY

As a mother, I can understand how heartbreaking this must be for his parents... I really hope that this ordeal will lead to real changes to how the authorities will handle the safety of our national servicemen. There have been too many deaths.



MRS LIM, a housewife who says she "felt compelled" to turn up, even though she was not familiar with the actor's works.

Move to lower training tempo a good initial response: Observers

Lim Min Zhang

The move by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) to lower its training tempo across all services for the first time after five fatal incidents in 16 months is a good initial response, said defence observers.

They were reacting to the announcement by Chief of Defence Force Melvyn Ong at a media briefing on Thursday that he had asked all services to review their training

tempo and to focus on the safety of all personnel.

While no further details were available, Lieutenant-General Ong said the change in tempo would involve lowering the duration, intensity and frequency of training, with the aim of freeing up time and space to review the safety of the systems and processes across services.

The briefing was held following the death of Corporal First Class (NS) Aloysius Pang, who was seri-

ously injured while carrying out repair works in a Singapore Self-Propelled Howitzer during an exercise in New Zealand. He died of his injuries on Wednesday.

Mr Eddie Lim of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) said that the SAF's call to halt all high-risk training temporarily is its way of ensuring that time is taken to review and reinforce its training safety protocols.

"Done right, this would enhance operational readiness by instilling confidence in the commanders and men that they are ready for the challenging demands expected of our national security forces," he said.

Mr Lim, who has served as an operationally ready national serviceman (NSman) for 20 years, said a lowering of tempo could include specific periods of time that are carved out to reinforce training safety protocols.

"This lowering of tempo also creates an environment for all involved to take charge of their own safety awareness," added Mr Lim, who heads the military studies programme at RSIS.

Mr Kurt Wee, president of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises and an NSman, said the lowering of training tempo is a good first step to refocus on safety.

Mr Wee, who serves on the Ministry of Defence's Advisory Council on Community Relations in Defence, believes that despite the incidents, many NSmen will continue to have "a strong belief in the need for defence readiness as part of the total national defence strategy".

RSIS associate research fellow Ho Shu Huang said that beyond calling for a safety timeout, lowering the training tempo is an additional concrete action that allows the SAF to demonstrate its commitment to training safety. "Each time an accident happens, a timeout and detailed safety review may indeed be the most appropriate course of action."

He added: "Yet, this could come across as a vague and non-specific stock response. It may sound like a broken record to the public."

He noted that there are many ques-

tions the public has which the SAF could not answer at the moment.

For instance, it is unclear who pressed the automatic button to lower the gun barrel that crushed CFC Pang against the interior of the howitzer's cabin.

He was in the cabin with a gun detachment commander and another technician.

There are also no details on whether the actor was aware that the gun barrel was being lowered and if there were attempts to stop it.

But Mr Ho said: "That a press conference was held quickly with journalists before investigations are completed, together with how it was fronted by the Chief of Defence Force and Chief of Army and not a Mindef spokesman, suggests a desire for transparency."

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News analysis

SAF needs to probe deeper into safety culture

It has to find reason behind recent incidents after four years of zero fatalities



Lim Min Zhang

For four years leading up to August 2017, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) had a clean record of zero operations- and training-related fatalities. It was a hard-earned achievement in the light of a terrible 2012, when four SAF servicemen died in separate training incidents in that year alone. The four years of zero fatalities was an achievement held up by Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen in August 2017 at an appreciation dinner for volunteers who had contributed to national defence. Attributing the record to the impact of the External Review Panel on SAF Safety (ERPSS) that was set up in 2013, Dr Ng said: "The contributions of this panel have had the impact of saving lives." But since then, the SAF has seen five fatal incidents.

It began with Third Sergeant Gavin Chan who died in September 2017 in an exercise in Australia after a Bionix tank he was commanding overturned on a steep embankment. This was followed by Corporal First Class (CFC) Dave Lee's death from heatstroke on April 30 last year after completing an 8km fast march in Bedok Camp. Third Warrant Officer Muhammad Sadikin died after he was hit by a falling tree branch in October last year while supervising maintenance work in Brunei. Last November, CFC Liu Kai died after a Bionix armoured vehicle reversed into a Land Rover he was driving as part of a field training exercise in the Jalan Murai training area. The latest is actor Aloysius Pang, an operationally ready national serviceman (NSman) who died on Wednesday from injuries suffered when he was crushed by a lowering gun barrel while carrying out repair work inside a howitzer. With each incident, public



(From left) Mindef's director of manpower Lee Chung Wei, Chief of Army Goh Si Hou, Chief of Defence Force Melvyn Ong, Combat Service Support Command Commander Terry Tan and Chief Army Medical Officer Edward Lo Hong Yee at the ministry's press conference on the death of CFC (NS) Aloysius Pang on Thursday. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

concern over SAF safety standards has intensified. The latest incident involving the high-profile death of the actor has cast a harsh spotlight on the issue. The SAF top brass have defended the armed forces' safety systems as being sound and robust, though they also recognise there is room for improvement. The unprecedented move by the SAF in lowering its training tempo across all services – announced by Chief of Defence Force Melvyn Ong on Thursday – shows a recognition by the military leadership that such incidents have to stop. Still, some serious questions need to be asked. First, is there a culture of complacency that might have slipped in after the four years of zero fatalities? After all, the latest incident means that the five fatalities now run the full gamut of SAF personnel types: regulars, NSmen and full-time national servicemen (NSFs).


The incidents have occurred in a wide range of scenarios: From training in camp, to participating in overseas exercises, to doing repair work. Does the full range of personnel types and scenarios show that the problem of slipping safety standards runs deep and wide across the SAF? Also, the move in lowering the current training tempo – which refers to the duration, intensity and frequency of training activities – raises the question of whether it has been climbing to an unsustainable level over the past years. While the relationship between training tempo and training safety is unclear, has the SAF nevertheless effectively kept watch over this issue? Third, have the recommendations by the various safety review panels, including the first ERPSS, been effectively implemented? The panel was set up following the spate of incidents in 2012 that

led to a number of deaths. These included a 21-year-old NSF who died from an allergic reaction to fumes from smoke grenades, and a 20-year-old NSF who was killed when his jeep overturned. Another NSF, aged 20, drowned in Brunei in August that year during a river crossing training exercise. After a three-year review, the panel found that SAF commanders strongly emphasised safety in their training and invested substantially in safety, and that the SAF management systems were sound and aligned with external industry standards. But it also cited areas that could be improved, like promoting the open reporting of accidents. On this front, Dr Ng told Parliament last August, following CFC Lee's death, that the SAF would strengthen open reporting, where servicemen will be encouraged to report unauthorised activities through a hotline. He reiterated in a Facebook post

on Thursday that if any SAF soldier detects an unsafe practice, he should inform his commander or stop training to protect himself or his buddies. "No one needs to fear any disciplinary action for doing right to protect lives during training," he added. It was reported last August that the army safety hotline has received about 50 calls every year since it was set up in 2011. Have more calls been made since then? Could more regular updates be provided on the implementation of other safety recommendations to boost public confidence that the actions taken were effective? To be fair, the SAF has adopted a more targeted approach to investigating the causes in the recent incidents. For instance, it has set up independent panels to study vehicular safety and heat injury management following the deaths of 3SG Chan and CFC Lee, respectively. But clearly, more needs to be

done to investigate if there is a fundamental and common root cause behind the recent poor safety record. A second ERPSS convened in July 2017, which is in the middle of its work, should look deeper into the safety culture. The SAF has shown that it can get things right, based on the four years of zero fatalities. What it needs to do is to study what went right then and what has gone wrong since 2017. A lot is at stake. At the 2017 appreciation dinner, Dr Ng said: "Safe training raises morale and encourages soldiers to train even harder." Conversely, five fatal incidents in 16 months might affect soldiers' morale and confidence in training. This, in turn, might lead to a dip in public confidence, which is crucial to an armed forces where citizen soldiers make up the majority of its manpower. mzlim@sph.com.sg

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- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Coloured caricature | 12pm to 6pm |
| • Rainbow calligraphy | 12pm to 6pm |
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| • Lion Dance and God of Fortune Appearance | 2pm |

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More flats sold in 2018, with 71 going for \$1m and above

But HDB resale prices hit seven-year low even as transactions increase by 4.6%

Rachel Au-Yong
Housing Correspondent

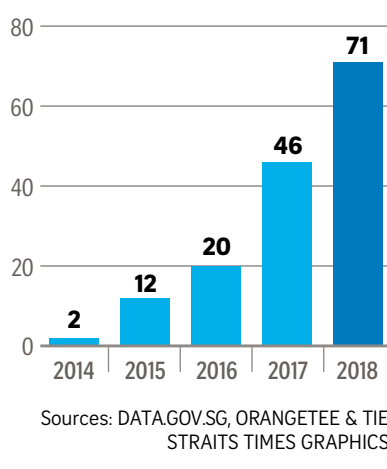
More Housing Board flats changed hands last year, with a record 71 flats sold for \$1 million or more each. This came as resale prices slipped for a fifth straight year, hitting a seven-year low. In all, 23,099 resale flats were sold last year, 4.6 per cent more

than the 22,077 transactions in 2017, according to HDB's quarterly report released yesterday. Meanwhile, resale prices slipped 0.2 per cent in the final quarter of last year, making for a full-year decrease of 0.9 per cent – confirming flash estimates earlier this month. OrangeTee & Tie research head Christine Sun noted that 2018's decline was less steep than 2017's 1.5 per cent dip. One factor behind

this, she said, was that there were more transactions of newer HDB flats which have just reached their minimum occupation period and fetched good prices. "More HDB resale flats were sold above \$700,000 last year, especially non-standard ones... A record 71 flats were also transacted at \$1 million and above," she said. The number of such million-dollar flats has been increasing exponentially, with two such transactions in 2014, and 46 in 2017. The majority of such flats are non-standard ones, such as Design, Build and Sell scheme flats like The Peak

in Toa Payoh, the Central Business District-located Pinnacle@Duxton estate or rare terraced houses in Jalan Bahagia or Stirling Road. But over the last two years, more standard HDB flats have traded at eye-watering prices. Last year, "normal" four-room flats crossed the \$1 million mark for the first time, with at least four such transactions taking place in Tiong Bahru. Ms Sun said this could hint at a growing price divergence between HDB market segments, with the price weakness affecting some more than others. "Smaller or older flats experi-

Number of HDB flats sold for \$1m and above



enced greater challenges in finding a buyer as they are impacted by growing concerns about the depreciating value of ageing flats and a growing supply of newer HDB flats that are being put up for resale in the non-mature estates," she said.



For the whole of last year, landed home prices rose by 6.3 per cent, and private apartment and condominium prices by 8.3 per cent. Analysts are divided over the direction of private home prices this year. Some see growth slowing because of the cooling measures and a large supply pipeline, while others see prices supported by new launches in the prime or core central region. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG

New private home prices up 7.9% in 2018 despite cooling measures

Grace Leong
Business Correspondent

New private home prices gained 7.9 per cent last year, compared with a 1.1 per cent rise in 2017, even as last July's cooling measures appear to have ended further price recovery after just five quarters, the shortest spurt on record. Slower private home sales, launches and resale transactions sent prices down by 0.1 per cent in the fourth quarter. This compared with a 0.8 per cent gain a year ago and a rise of 0.5 per cent in the third quarter, the Urban Redevelopment Authority said yesterday. Leading the fall are landed home prices, which fell by 2 per cent in the fourth quarter, compared with a 2.3 per cent gain in the third. But

non-landed property prices edged up 0.5 per cent after remaining unchanged in the previous quarter. For the whole of last year, landed home prices rose by 6.3 per cent, and private apartment and condominium prices by 8.3 per cent. Cooling measures introduced on July 6 last year saw the additional buyer's stamp duty (ABSD) raised and loan-to-value limits tightened. Analysts are divided over the direction of private home prices this year. Some see growth slowing because of the cooling measures and a large supply pipeline, while others see prices supported by new launches in the prime or core central region (CCR). OrangeTee & Tie research and consultancy head Christine Sun sees price growth slowing significantly. "Many new projects are currently

priced at the 'sweet spot'. If the global economy does not deteriorate drastically and the job market remains healthy, overall prices are likely to remain flat or rise marginally this year," she said. Last year's growth was largely fuelled by pent-up demand, attractive new launches and a positive economic outlook. "We estimate that overall private home prices could potentially climb by 3 per cent in 2019, in line with economic growth – barring any unforeseen events," said Ms Tricia Song, head of research for Colliers International, Singapore. Prices of non-landed properties in the prime district fell by 1 per cent in the fourth quarter due largely to soft resale transactions, Ms Song said, compared with a 1.3 per cent gain in the third. But

prices of new launches such as 8 Saint Thomas, New Futura and Marina One Residences held up. New Futura units sold at a median price of \$3,238 per sq ft (psf) in the fourth quarter, up from \$3,226 psf in the third. "We expect CCR home prices could climb by 5 per cent in 2019, supported by demand for prime district homes," she said. Meanwhile, prices in the city fringes or rest of central region (RCR) rose by 1.8 per cent, compared with the 1.3 per cent drop in the previous quarter. "Woodleigh Residences was launched at a benchmark \$2,000 psf," Ms Song said. "We estimate that RCR private home values could possibly rise by 3 per cent in 2019 due to new launches such as the former Normanton Park (privatised housing estate) and former Park West (condo)." Prices in the suburbs or outside central region (OCR) rose by 0.7 per cent, compared with a 0.1 per cent decline in the third quarter. "Given the substantial pipeline of new supply – such as the 2,225-unit Treasure at Tampines and

1,410-unit The Florence Residences – we expect prices in (the suburbs) to remain flat in 2019," Ms Song said. For last year, prices of non-landed homes in the CCR, RCR and OCR rose by 6.7 per cent, 7.4 per cent and 9.4 per cent, respectively. For the fourth quarter, developers sold 1,836 private residential units (excluding executive condominiums, or ECs), down from 3,012 units in the previous quarter. For the whole of last year, new home sales fell 16.8 per cent to 8,795 units – the worst drop since a 6.3 per cent fall in 2012 after the first round of ABSD. Mr Desmond Sim, head of research at CBRE Singapore & Southeast Asia, noted that in addition to 35,649 unsold units (including ECs) with planning approval, there is a potential supply of 9,800 units from government land sales sites and awarded collective sale sites that have not been granted planning approval. "CBRE expects the bulk of these will be launched this year, with some spillover into 2020," he said.

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Private home rentals weaken ahead of increased supply

Private home rentals ended a three quarter winning streak in the fourth quarter despite vacancy rates hitting a five-year low, analysts said. This, as a large supply pipeline is looming and hiring sentiment has turned cautious due to geopolitical uncertainty and an expected economic slowdown. Rents declined 1 per cent in the October to December quarter, compared with a 0.3 per cent increase in the previous quarter, according to data from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) released yesterday. For 2018, private home rents rose by 0.6 per cent compared

with a decline of 1.9 per cent in 2017. The contraction in rents was led by the landed segment, which fell 2.1 per cent in the fourth quarter, against a 0.5 per cent rise in the previous quarter. But for 2018, rents of landed properties rose 2 per cent. Rents of non-landed properties fell by 0.8 per cent, compared with a 0.3 per cent increase in the previous quarter, and were up 0.4 per cent in 2018. Outside Central Region (OCR) rents registered the second biggest decline, falling by 1.7 per cent, compared with the 0.9 per cent increase in the previous quarter. Rents of non-landed properties

in the Core Central Region (CCR) fell by 0.6 per cent, compared with a 0.9 per cent drop in the previous quarter. Rents in the Rest of Central Region (RCR) dipped 0.5 per cent, compared with the 1.5 per cent increase in the previous quarter. For 2018, rents of non-landed properties in the CCR decreased by 0.1 per cent, while rents in the RCR and OCR increased by 1.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent, respectively. Even though the vacancy rate hit a five-year low of 6.4 per cent, that did not boost rents significantly, noted Mr Ong Teck Hui, JLL's senior director (research & consultancy).

This, as landlords are being more flexible about closing deals ahead of a large supply pipeline coming up after 2020 and as leasing demand is capped by policy controls on hiring of foreign labour, Mr Ong said. Still, this is an improvement, compared with a vacancy rate of 6.8 per cent in the third quarter, according to OrangeTee & Tie research and consultancy head Christine Sun, given a bigger jump in available private homes in the fourth quarter. The improving vacancy rate may be a sign that the leasing market could be recovering, she said. Another positive is that an increasing number of large firms like

Dyson may shift their headquarters or key operations here amid rising global geopolitical uncertainty. "Global brands and MNCs looking for stability and long-term investment potential will find Singapore attractive for its political stability, effective infrastructure and business friendliness," Ms Sun said. Vacancy rates of completed private homes at the end of the fourth quarter in the CCR, RCR and OCR were 7.9 per cent, 7.4 per cent and 5.1 per cent, respectively, against 10.4 per cent, 8.1 per cent and 4.5 per cent in the previous quarter.

Grace Leong

But ERA Realty key executive officer Eugene Lim said the headline-making transactions remain an exception in the current market. Given recent cooling measures, rising interest rates and an ongoing fear of paying more than what a flat is valued at, buyers are likely to remain conservative, with HDB prices rising by about 1 per cent at the most this year, he said. Huttons Asia's research head Lee Sze Teck said it was "unlikely to be the end of the slide for the HDB resale market". He predicted that prices would fluctuate between minus 1 per cent and 0 per cent this year. But expected changes to Central Provident Fund usage for older flats later this year could "give a fillip to the HDB resale market". There will be about 15,000 new flats launched for sale this year, with the first exercise next month seeing 3,100 flats in Jurong West, Kallang Whampoa and Sengkang on offer. There will be a concurrent Re-Offer of Balance Flats exercise.

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Stunning run for office market, but uncertainty looms

Ng Jun Sen
Business Correspondent

Prime office rents turned in a robust performance last year after a lacklustre 2017, according to data out yesterday. Rents in the central region rose by 7.4 per cent, a marked improvement from the 0.4 per cent increase in the preceding 12 months. The rise came in spite of the fourth-quarter performance, when rents rose just 0.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter, well down on the 2.5 per cent hike recorded in the third. The figures from the Urban Redevelopment Authority yesterday "affirmed that Singapore's office property market ran a stunning race in 2018", said Ms Tay Huey Ying, JLL's head of research and consultancy. She noted that the full-year net absorption reached a six-year high of 172,000 sq m last year, nearly triple the 60,000 sq m in 2017. Net absorption, which measures the amount of new space leased by tenants minus the space vacated, is a key indicator of a property market's momentum. More than 90 per cent of this activity last year was in the downtown core region, with tenants signing leases in new projects, leaving vacant space that was then filled by other occupiers. There was also strong leasing activity from a broad range of industries and co-working operators. But the higher rents of central region offices could hit demand. Mr Desmond Sim, CBRE's head of research in Singapore and Southeast Asia, said tenants continue to head to newer and higher-quality developments. The trend was mirrored in a recent survey by Colliers International, which noted that some central business district (CBD) landlords regarded these developments as a key challenge. Ms Tay agreed: "We foresee that office demand will spill out of the CBD in 2019, with newer developments located close to the CBD enjoying an edge over others." The islandwide vacancy rate fell from 12.7 per cent in 2017 to 12.1 per cent at the end of last year, although on a quarter-on-quarter basis, vacancies inched up by 0.1 per cent in the last quarter. This rise was due to new offices being finished in the rest of the central region, said Mr Duncan White, head of office services at Colliers. With robust demand and tapering supply, industry experts expect office vacancy rates to tighten and prime rents to appreciate further. But this also depends on how the economy here and overseas performs, said Mr Calvin Yeo, executive director and head of office advisory at Knight Frank Singapore, who predicts an 8 per cent to 10 per cent increase for prime offices this year. Meanwhile, prime retail rents stemmed their decline a little, falling 1 per cent last year compared with a 4.7 per cent slide in 2017. Vacancies islandwide increased by 0.9 percentage point, from 7.6 per cent in the third quarter of last year to 8.5 per cent in the fourth. The numbers show that there is still underlying uncertainty in the sector despite an increase in retail sales and tourism growth, said Mr Sim.

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Think long term, stay united to tackle global headwinds, says Heng

Right governance is key and people need to understand fragmentation is harmful, he says

Sumiko Tan
Executive Editor
In Davos

Singapore is not shielded from global headwinds and the best way to tackle this is to stay united, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat said yesterday after a packed four days of meeting world and business leaders at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

He noted that with the rise of populism worldwide, there was a sense that unity and solidarity had been lost in many parts of the world.

In turn, the political system had become such that in order to win votes, politicians made promises which they would find hard to fulfil when they got elected, or fulfil at a great cost to future generations.

"This is a rather negative development of politics in all parts of the

world, and I think it is very important for us in Singapore to have the right governance and for our people to understand that fragmentation, in order to pursue individual interests, special interests and so on, will be very harmful to all our well-being," he said.

If politicians were concerned about just the next electoral cycle, the system would become one where the focus was on winning votes.

"You end up doing many short-term things, and make promises you can't fulfil," he told Singapore reporters at the Sunstar Alpine hotel before heading home.

"The process becomes like a bidding war, and obviously the highest bidder wins. But when the highest bidder wins, they find it hard to fulfil the promises, and you find that in many countries. And then of course the next round, the bid gets even

higher." The first and foremost duty of politicians in Singapore was to advance the interests of Singapore and Singaporeans, "and not just in the short run, but in the long term".

Short-termism was something world and business leaders he met expressed concern about, which he also shared.

This was Mr Heng's second time at the WEF. His first was in the late 1990s when he was principal private secretary to then Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

The WEF is an independent international body committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders from all fields. The annual meeting packs hundreds of sessions against the backdrop of the picturesque Swiss Alps.

The theme of this year's annual meeting was Globalisation 4.0: Shaping A New Architecture In The Age Of The Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Mr Heng said his key takeaway was how the confluence of technological advancements and globalisation was accelerating the pace of



SITUATION NOT BLEAK FOR SINGAPORE

Clouds are gathered over the global economy. They will not disappear soon, and will probably get darker and more troubling in the years to come. But the situation is not bleak for Singapore, and we do not look on these global problems helplessly. We can still do well, by educating our young for a new world, developing deeper skills in every job and paying special attention to helping those who lose their jobs, strengthening the innovative capabilities of our enterprises, and by building on our biggest international asset – our credibility among countries and businesses from around the world.



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER THARMAR SHANMUGARATNAM, who was also at the Davos forum, in a Facebook post last night.

Talking to reporters yesterday, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat said his key takeaway was that the confluence of technological advancements and globalisation was accelerating the pace of change, and many societies were not prepared for this. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF FINANCE

change, and that many societies were not prepared for this.

While optimists saw opportunities, there were those who feared the consequences of the inability to cope with change.

Questions were being asked on whether globalisation would continue to have the support of people or would it be reversed, and what needed to be done to ensure people maximised the benefits of globalisation.

For Singapore, the Government had to ensure that at the national

level, industries were equipped to ride the changes.

This was why the Industry Transformation Maps were set out, and the Government would continue to speed up their implementation.

Workers would be helped to equip themselves with the skills to meet change. Lifelong learning would also continue to be emphasised as employees and companies restructure.

On the international front, trade agreements with other countries would provide support and momen-

tum for continued globalisation.

"We need to move Singaporeans through this, and I believe we have the means and will to make these changes," he said.

More would be revealed in the Budget statement on Feb 18 which Mr Heng will announce. The minister said he had been working on it as well during his time in Davos, but laughed and did not say more when asked for details.

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S'pore helps nudge WTO closer to setting e-commerce rules

DAVOS • Digital trade, including e-commerce, is one of the bright spots in the global economy and offers many opportunities, including for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), said Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran.

To that end, Singapore, together with Australia and Japan, hosted a meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) members yesterday to kick-start negotiations for rules governing e-commerce.

The meeting took place in Davos on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The meeting was a step forward for the Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce initiative launched at a WTO ministerial conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017.

The three countries then led exploratory work geared towards laying the foundation for WTO negotiations. Yesterday's meeting moves the matter into the negotiations stage, with the aim of getting as many WTO members to participate as possible.

Mr Iswaran said this will take forward the digital trade agenda. It will also strengthen the WTO as a multilateral agency which is able to continue to respond to the latest needs of the economy, and respond to it by creating a set of rules and norms.

Speaking to Singapore reporters after four days of back-to-back discussions at the WEF, Mr Iswaran, who is also Minister for Communications and Information, said there was general concern about the state of global trade and its implications for the global economy, primarily because of the United States-China trade spat.

Cyber security was also a topic that came up, with participants calling for a global rules-based norm to ensure a safe and secured cyberspace which businesses and consumers can use.

He said that Singapore's contributions, not just in terms of what is happening in Singapore but its work with international partners, were welcomed.

"Many businesses as well as international organisations and coun-



Digital trade, including e-commerce, is one of the bright spots in the global economy and offers many opportunities, said Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran. PHOTO: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

tries are keen to work with us," he said at the Sunstar Alpine hotel before heading home.

Singapore had, earlier in the week, introduced a model framework for the governance of artificial intelligence (AI), which Mr Iswaran said had been well-received.

"It positions us well in terms of the global discourse on AI and also other frontier technologies which have much potential for the future," he said.

Beyond global trade, the issue of inclusiveness in economic growth was a big topic.

"There is a recognition that while globalisation and also technology developments contribute to growing the pie, the distribution of the pie can get more asymmetric," he said.

"Those who have more access to technology, and who are able to use technology more proficiently, will

tend to be greater beneficiaries. Those who are able to adapt to globalisation better are going to be better beneficiaries."

He said such issues of inclusivity and growth are something that Singapore has focused on for some time, pointing to efforts in the training and reskilling of Singaporeans through SkillsFuture and helping SMEs go digital.

He added that from his discussions, he was struck by how Singapore is held in high regard "as a place that is able to not just offer thought leadership on important global issues, but also as a place where we are getting things done, and that we are not just deliberating on a conceptual level, and are actually translating them into specific policies, and implementing them".

Sumiko Tan

76 countries, regions agree on talks to set e-commerce rules

DAVOS • Impatient with a lack of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules to cover the explosive growth of e-commerce, 76 countries and regions, including the United States, the European Union and Japan, have agreed to start negotiating a set of open and predictable regulations.

China, which is locked in a trade war with the US, signalled conditional support for the initiative but said that it should also take into account the needs of developing countries.

E-commerce, or online trade in goods and services, has become a huge component of the global economy. A WTO report put the total value of e-commerce in 2016 at US\$27.7 trillion (S\$37.6 trillion), of which nearly US\$24 trillion was from business-to-business transactions.

On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, negotiators from the 76 countries and regions agreed yesterday to hammer out an agenda for discussions they hope to kick off this year on

setting new e-commerce rules.

"The current WTO rules don't match the needs of the 21st century. You can tell that from the fact there are no solid rules on e-commerce," Japan's Trade Minister Hiroshige Seko told reporters in Davos.

In their joint statement, the members of the coalition said: "We will seek to achieve a high-standard outcome that builds on existing WTO agreements and frameworks with the participation of as many WTO members as possible."

China's WTO Ambassador Zhang Xiangchen said the e-commerce declaration "could have been better drafted", but Beijing was still willing to co-sponsor it and would play an active role in the exploratory talks.

Another Asian giant, India, did not join the initiative. It has previously said that the WTO should finish the stalled but development-oriented "Doha Round" of talks before moving into new areas.

REUTERS

Climate change dominates discussion on last day

DAVOS • Climate change topped the discussion at the closing session of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in the Swiss Alps, just as it had dominated the rest of the four-day event.

"Climate change is happening faster than we thought it would," World Bank chief executive officer Kristalina Georgieva told the world's political and business elite yesterday, the WEF said in a media statement.

She called on governments and businesses to eliminate harmful subsidies for energy and agriculture, invest in shifting to a low-carbon economy, support those countries most at risk of the consequences of climate change, and relentlessly pursue a price for carbon.

Surface temperatures have already risen by nearly 1 deg C and they are not stopping, with the five warmest years on record occurring since 2010.

A rise of 3 deg C will wipe out 25 per cent of global gross domestic



Students taking part in a "School Strike for Climate" outside the Davos Congress Centre yesterday. Aside from climate change, inequality and youth unemployment also featured in the final discussion of this year's World Economic Forum. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

product, while the cost in human suffering will be immeasurable, according to the World Bank.

The warning from the World Bank came a day after United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the business and political leaders gathered at the Swiss

town of Davos that climate change is "the most important global systemic threat in relation to the global economy".

He said: "Climate change is running faster than we are. I believe we are losing the race."

Aside from the global crisis, in-

equality and youth unemployment also featured in the final discussion yesterday.

Mr Lesetja Kganyago, governor of the South African Reserve Bank, said governments and unions need to work together to make the transitions in labour that are needed.

"You cannot protect jobs," said Mr Kganyago, "you must think how we protect people."

Meanwhile, inequality remains a pressing issue.

The top 1 per cent in the Group of 20 countries earn 10 per cent of total income, while half the world

has nearly no access to healthcare.

Ms Georgieva called on leaders to focus more attention on those who are losing out and left behind.

"Put decisions into the hands of mums and grandmothers and you will see great things happen" she said, to applause from the hall.

Soros flags Xi as biggest threat to free society

Billionaire investor says Chinese leader presides over high-tech surveillance regime

DAVOS (Switzerland) • Billionaire investor George Soros has said that Chinese President Xi Jinping is “the most dangerous enemy” of free societies for presiding over a high-tech surveillance regime.

“China is not the only authoritarian regime in the world, but it is the wealthiest, strongest and technologically most advanced,” he told a dinner audience on the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

“This makes Xi Jinping the most dangerous opponent of open societies,” he said, also noting concerns about President Vladimir Putin’s Russia.

China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs brushed off the accusation.

“What this individual said has confused black and white, right and wrong, it is meaningless and not worth refuting,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying said in response to a question at a daily briefing.

The Hungarian-born philanthropist said US tech giants like Facebook must be reined in by the authorities for the good of democracy.

He pointed “to the mortal danger facing open societies from the instruments of control that machine learning and artificial intelligence can put in the hands of repressive regimes”.

Mr Soros dwelt on concerns in the West about Chinese technology giants ZTE and Huawei, as countries roll out next-generation 5G wireless networks.

He said United States President Donald Trump should crack down hard on the companies as part of a more focused effort on China in-

stead of taking on “practically the whole world” in trade conflicts.

“If these companies came to dominate the 5G market, they would present an unacceptable security risk for the rest of the world,” Mr Soros said in a speech, copies of which were distributed in Chinese.

Communist China under Mr Xi has been building a cutting-edge system, including facial recognition, to keep tabs on its citizens, and Mr Soros said algorithms would calculate how dangerous a threat individuals might pose to the regime. “The ‘social credit’ system, if it became operational, would give Xi total control over the people,” he said at the dinner, which was open to the media.

“Since Xi is the most dangerous enemy of the open society, we must pin our hopes on the Chinese people, and especially on the business community and a political elite willing to uphold the Confucian tradition,” he said, referencing the ancient history of Chinese officials speaking truth to power, on pain of imprisonment or death.

“This doesn’t mean that those of us who believe in the open society should remain passive,” Mr Soros added. “The reality is that we are in a Cold War that threatens to turn into a hot one.”

“On the other hand, if Xi and Trump were no longer in power, an opportunity would present itself to develop greater cooperation between the two cyber superpowers,” he said.

Mr Soros’ dinner speeches are an annual tradition at the elite business forum in Davos, and this



CHANCE FOR COOPERATION

If Xi and Trump were no longer in power, an opportunity would present itself to develop greater cooperation between the two cyber superpowers.



MR GEORGE SOROS, billionaire investor.

year, it came after a particularly difficult period for his Open Society Foundations.

Last month, the Soros-funded Central European University said it had been forced to move its most prestigious study programmes to Vienna after a bitter legal battle with the right-wing government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban in his native Hungary.

Mr Soros did not touch on the issue in his Davos speech, but did say: “Those of us who want to preserve the open society must work together and form an effective alliance. We have a task that can’t be left to governments.”

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SEE OPINION A40



Young climate crusader Greta Thunberg with French central bank governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau (left) and consultancy firm Willis Towers Watson’s CEO John Haley at a WEF panel discussion in Davos yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Teenager takes on Davos elite over inaction on climate change

Arvind Jayaram

A Swedish teenager used a lunch at the World Economic Forum in Davos to tell world leaders, business figures and celebrities that rather than finding a solution to global warming, some of them were profiting from inaction on climate change.

“Some people say that the climate crisis is something that we all have created. But that is not true because if everyone is guilty, then no one is to blame. And someone is to blame,” 16-year-old climate crusader Greta Thunberg told the audience that included musicians Bono and Will.i.am, anthropologist Jane Goodall, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change executive secretary Christiana Figueres and Japanese insurer Sampo Holdings president Kengo Sakurada.

“Some people, some companies and some decision-makers in particular have known exactly what

priceless values they have been sacrificing to continue making unimaginable amounts of money. And I think many of you here today belong to that group of people,” Ms Thunberg said to applause.

She told news agency DPA yesterday that she wanted the prospect of global warming to instil fear in world leaders and jolt them into action. “I want you to feel the fear I feel every day, and then I want you to act,” she said. “I want you to act as if the house was on fire, because it is.”

Her address on Thursday drew elements from a speech she delivered after arriving in Davos by train and publicised by Greenpeace. In that speech, she had rejected the notion that “we are not doing enough to fight climate change.”

“Because of ‘not do enough’, you have to do something. And the truth is we are basically not doing anything,” she said.

She pointed at the outsized efforts by some to fight climate

change, but noted that they were too far from power to make a difference, unlike world leaders and large companies.

“I want to challenge those companies and those decision-makers into real and bold climate action. To set their economic goals aside and to safeguard the future living conditions for humankind,” said the teen activist.

“I don’t believe for one second that you will rise to that challenge. But I want to ask you all the same. I ask you to prove me wrong. For the sake of your children, for the sake of your grandchildren. For the sake of life and this beautiful living planet.”

The young environmentalist has become a prominent voice pressing the global elite to take action on climate change. She first came into the spotlight when she began skipping school every Friday to protest in front of the Swedish Parliament.

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KL, S'pore extend suspension of airport, airspace measures

Khaw accepts Malaysian counter-proposal of March 31 after seeking longer extension

Karamjit Kaur
Senior Aviation Correspondent
Hazlin Hassan
Malaysia Correspondent

Singapore and Malaysia have agreed to extend their mutual suspension of two measures to March 31 while the two countries thrash out airspace issues.
Transport Minister Khaw Boon

Wan said he has accepted Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke's counter-proposal that the suspension be extended to end-March. Singapore had sought an extension until end-May.
Both countries had on Jan 8 agreed to a one-month suspension of the restricted area over Pasir Gudang and the new Instrument Landing System (ILS) at Seletar Airport.
In a Facebook post yesterday, Mr

Khaw said: "It is a good idea to nudge our officials to follow up speedily on what the two ministers had agreed on the way forward."
Accordingly, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) coordinated and published the new notices simultaneously at 6pm to effect the decision.
Mr Khaw added: "I am happy to see the two regulators working together for the larger good of civil aviation safety and efficiency in our congested airspace."
The two ministers had met in Singapore on Wednesday. It was then

that Mr Khaw suggested an extension until end-May to give officials "more discussion time to reach a win-win outcome".
Mr Loke, who took the proposal to the Cabinet, said earlier yesterday that Malaysia had proposed a shorter extension.
"I briefed the Cabinet on Thursday. But the Prime Minister (Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad) said it might be a bit too long and asked that we shorten it. This morning, I contacted the Singapore High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur to counter-propose that we shorten it to March 31," he said.

"It is up to Singapore's side if they agree to it or not," he said, adding that it is "just a counter-proposal".
Mr Loke described his meeting with Mr Khaw as "a good discussion, very direct, very frank".
"Both sides are positively committed towards resolving the Seletar Airport issue," he said.
The two countries are embroiled in a dispute over Singapore's introduction of the ILS for Seletar Airport and Malaysia's subsequent decision to declare a restricted zone over Pasir Gudang for the purpose of military activities.
Malaysia claims that an ILS at Seletar Airport would hamper the construction of tall buildings in Pasir Gudang, in Johor, to the north of the airport. Singapore has said repeatedly that this is not true as the new landing system does not impose new height restrictions.
The only change on introducing an ILS is that pilots will be guided using ground instruments and will no longer rely on just their vision.
On Dec 25, Malaysia declared a re-

stricted area over Pasir Gudang, which was in the flight path for landing and take-off at Seletar Airport from the north. All planes heading to and from Seletar would need prior approval from the Royal Malaysian Air Force to operate in that zone between 2,000 feet and 5,000 feet, or avoid the area.
The disagreement over flight procedures for Seletar Airport is part of a larger air dispute that also includes Malaysia wanting to take back management of airspace over South Johor, a task delegated to Singapore in 1974.
Mr Khaw and Mr Loke will meet again after Chinese New Year to continue discussions on airspace.
Singapore and Malaysia are also locked in a maritime dispute, sparked by Malaysia's unilateral decision last October to extend the Johor Baru port limits, and subsequent intrusions by Malaysian government vessels into Singapore's territorial waters.

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Mobile phone retailer raided for suspected illegal moneylending

Joyce Lim
Senior Correspondent

A mobile phone retailer at Lucky Plaza which sold vouchers that maids used to remit money back home had its three premises raided yesterday by police investigating allegations of illegal moneylending.
The practice allegedly went around new borrowing caps meant to protect low-income migrant workers here.
Officers from the unlicensed moneylending unit were seen removing cartons of documents and receipts from Kata Store's three outlets at the Orchard Road mall.
The shop had openly advertised its remittance vouchers with bright yellow signs amid displays of smartphone paraphernalia. Police, who spent two hours in the shops from

about 11am, also seized these signs.
The Straits Times understands that it is the first time a business entity has been raided for illegal moneylending activities. Kata is not a licensed moneylender, said the Ministry of Law.
In response to queries from The Straits Times, police said they received a report on Dec 23. Investigations are ongoing.
ST had visited the shops over two Sundays last month. A steady stream of domestic helpers was seen entering Kata's shops to buy the remittance vouchers.
The maids allegedly paid a "down payment" of just over \$100 for a \$700 remittance voucher.
With the receipts, the maids then approached remittance agency Brunphil Express, also in Lucky Plaza, which would help them send \$700 to the Philippines.



Police taking away evidence after carrying out a raid on one of Kata Store's three outlets at Lucky Plaza yesterday. The retailer sold vouchers which maids used to remit money home – a practice which allegedly went around new borrowing caps meant to protect low-income migrant workers in Singapore.
ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG

ST spoke to 14 maids who said that they used Kata's services because they could no longer secure a loan from licensed moneylenders after tighter rules kicked in on Nov 30 last year. Under the new regula-

tions, foreigners earning less than \$10,000 a year here can borrow only up to \$1,500 from all licensed moneylenders combined.
Officers also raided Brunphil Express yesterday. A spokesman

for the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) said it is assisting police in investigations and will separately assess the case for potential breaches of MAS' rules and regulations. Brunphil Express cur-

rently holds a remittance licence issued by MAS.
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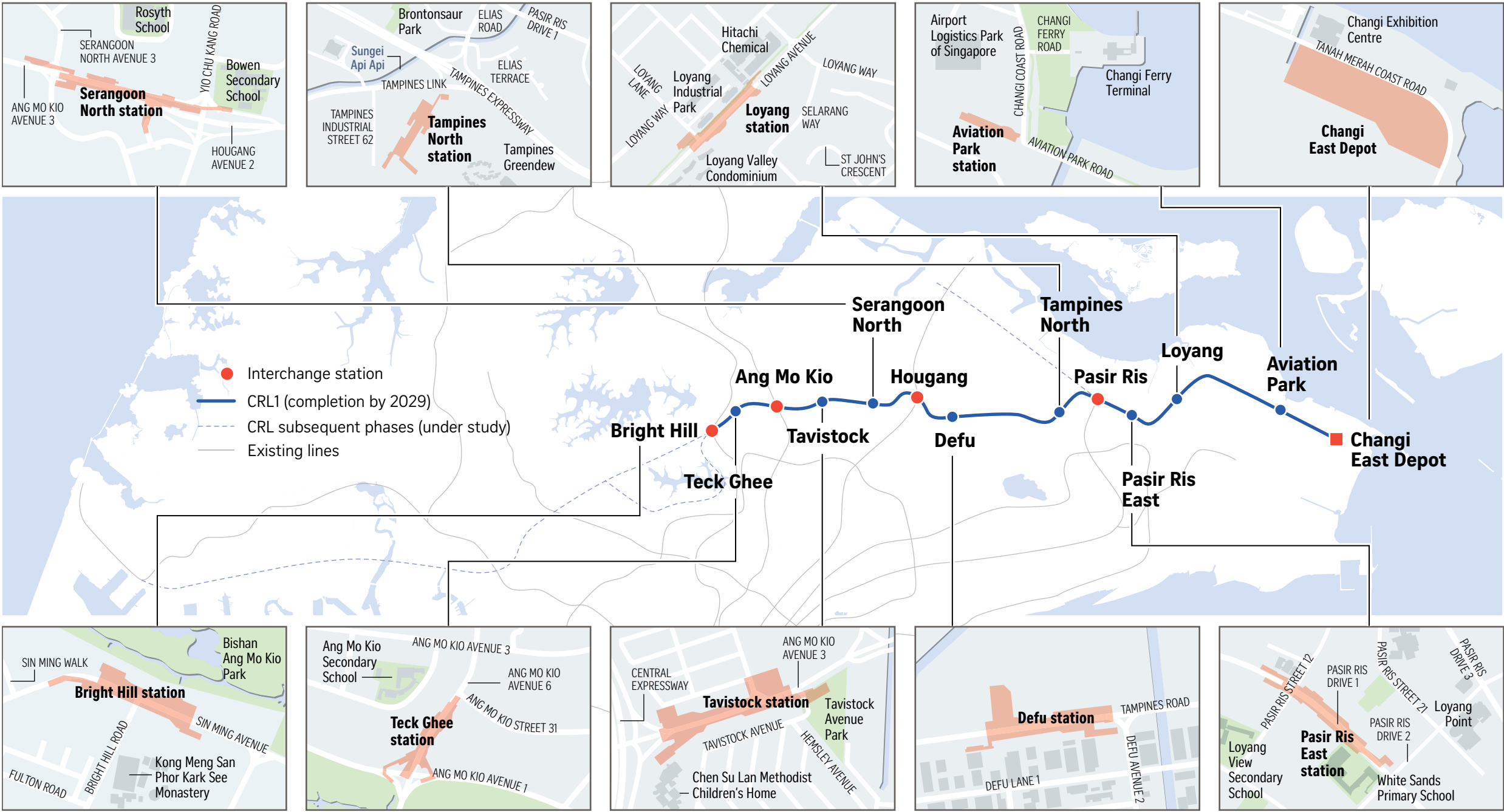
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Cross Island Line 1 to open by 2029



The Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, which is a 15-minute walk from Ang Mo Kio MRT station, will have two MRT stations close to it – Teck Ghee station and Bright Hill station – making the park more accessible to the community.

Source: LTA PHOTOS: ST IMAGES STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

News analysis

A unique MRT line with great potential

Besides increasing connectivity, new Cross Island Line could be used to transport freight



Christopher Tan
Senior Transport Correspondent

News of any new MRT line cannot come sooner. So it is too with the Cross Island Line, which was announced six years ago, in the 2013 Land Transport Master Plan. Stretching 50km from Changi to Tuas, it was to be up by 2030. Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan said yesterday that the first phase spanning 29km will be completed by 2029, 10 years from now. Unless the next phases get started soon, completion of the whole line may miss the 2030 target, a target pegged to another: to have eight in 10 households within a 10-minute walk of a station so that Singapore can be “car-lite”.

The hold-up (if indeed it is one) may have to do with the real possibility of having to tunnel beneath the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. This has long been a contentious issue with nature groups. Because even if the line is underground, ventilation shafts and escape hatches will have to go up to the surface. These structures are sizeable and would require cut-and-cover construction, a method which is almost certain to have an environmental impact on the gazetted protected area. At this stage, the alternative alignment – skirting around the reserve – looks unwieldy as it involves sharp right-angle turns and the likely acquisition of private properties. Mr Khaw told Parliament in 2016 that a skirting alignment would cost \$2 billion more and add six minutes to travelling time. The Government will have to make its case for taking the lower-cost option, financially at least. And the sooner it is able to do so, the sooner it can get on with the rest of the project.

Even though it will be Singapore’s eighth MRT project, it is a unique one. Stations will be designed to accommodate eight-car trains, but operations will start with six-car trains. It is the first line here to have this scaleable feature. It is similar to what Hong Kong had done for its MTR. A system which can be scaled up to cater to rising demand shows foresight and sound planning. Phase 1 of the project stretches from Changi East to Bright Hill. It will have only 12 stations – half the number you see on a line of a similar length. There are long empty stretches between some stations – for instance, from Aviation Park to Loyang; and from Tampines North to Defu. The latter is especially long, estimated at 6km or more. This is where Paya Lebar Air Base is currently sited. The airbase however, will be relocated from 2030, freeing up 800ha for residential and commercial use. Engineering provisions for future stations – such as station boxes – should be built along this stretch. Otherwise, adding stations to a line that is already up and running will be unthinkable. If, however, there are no plans for stations along these stretches (which is equally unthinkable), commuters should brace



Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan (second from left) looking at a map showing Phase 1 of the Cross Island Line during a visit to Bright Hill station yesterday. With him are (from left) Ms Cheng Li Hui, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport; Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Baey Yam Keng; and GPC for Transport members Melvin Yong and Ang Wei Neng. ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

themselves for sharper-than-usual fare rises down the road. This is because of the Public Transport Council’s new Network Capacity Factor (NCF), which tends to push fares higher if more transport capacity is created and demand does not rise correspondingly. If the Cross Island Line has fewer stations – and therefore fewer passenger catchment areas – the NCF could work against commuters for reasons which are beyond their control. In fact, they would actually face a double whammy – poorer

accessibility and the high probability of sharper fare rises. Still, the value proposition of the Cross Island Line is strong. Fewer stations could mean an express service. And with interchanges possibly at every line except the Circle Line, the Cross Island Line will improve all-round connectivity and make it more viable for folks to ditch their cars for public transport. It will serve areas which are not served by rail today. These include Tavistock (the edge of Serangoon Gardens), Serangoon North, Defu

and Loyang. What would be novel would be to incorporate freight on the Cross Island Line. It easily links Changi Airport to the new Tuas seaport. Rail freight movement will be swift and efficient, and will remove tens of thousands of pollutive trucks and lorries from the road. Perhaps the environmental gains here might be sufficient to offset the losses Singapore would incur if the line goes through the nature reserve.

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WORLD



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Academic studies of Bangkok's air reveal that within the very fine PM2.5 dust particles are at least 51 kinds of heavy metals, and cadmium, tungsten and arsenic are at unsafe levels by World Health Organisation standards. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangkok air full of toxic heavy metals, studies show

Traffic, factories and crematoriums found to be prime contributors of air pollution in Thai capital

BANGKOK • Bangkok's air is full of toxic heavy metals, researchers have discovered, and it is contributing to year-round hazardous threats to public health.

The director of the Centre for Research and Development of Disaster Prevention and Management at Thailand's National Institute of Development Administration on Thursday called on the Thai authorities to set out standards for controlling the emissions of every hazardous heavy metal found in the air.

Dr Siwatt Pongpiachan said his studies have found that Bangkok air contains harmful levels of cadmium, tungsten, arsenic and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

His two academic studies of the

Thai capital city's air pollution revealed that within the very fine PM2.5 dust particles were at least 51 kinds of heavy metals, of which three – cadmium, tungsten and arsenic – were found at unsafe levels, according to World Health Organisation standards.

"Right now, Thailand has set a safe emission standard only for lead. Even though we have detected lead in the air, its concentration is still within the safe level, thanks to the authorities' measures to get rid of lead from vehicle fuels and control the emissions of lead into the environment," he said.

"We need a similar set of safe-emission standards for other kinds of heavy metals as many of these

MAJOR SOURCES

Even though weather patterns during this time of the year and the transboundary haze are partially contributing to the serious smog problem, the research studies indicate that the exhaust from traffic, factories and crematoriums are the true major sources of air pollution in Bangkok.


DR SIWATT PONGPIACHAN

hazardous substances present very serious threats to human health in both the short and long term."

Studies conducted by environmental group Greenpeace have also noted another health threat from the toxic heavy metals found within PM2.5 particles.

The studies found that PM2.5 dust particles are contaminated with toxic environmental substances. The tiny particles – it takes three of them to equal the width of a human hair – can pass through the body's dust protection system found in the respiratory tract, enter the bloodstream and reach the internal organs, delivering the toxic particles directly into humans.

Dr Siwatt said the studies found that levels of these airborne toxic substances did not change much from week to week throughout the year, indicating that the majority of pollution sources were from local

areas of Bangkok.

"Even though weather patterns during this time of the year and the transboundary haze are partially contributing to the serious smog problem, the research studies indicate that the exhaust from traffic, factories and crematoriums are the true major sources of air pollution in Bangkok," he said.

He noted that the transport sector emits pollution in many ways, as the incomplete burning of fuel in the vehicles, especially those that use diesel fuel, emits a large amount of PAH.

These PAHs can cause cancer, while the city's traffic congestion also causes the level of tungsten in the air to rise significantly as drivers apply their car brakes – the heavy metal serves as a brake lining. Tungsten-contaminated PM2.5 are thus released into the air.

Meanwhile, cremation is a major source of air pollution and heavy metals, Dr Siwatt said.

Many parts of the human body, such as prostheses and tooth fillings, contain heavy metals and they are released into the environment during cremation.

"There are so many temples in Bangkok that cremate human bodies every day. Even though many of these temples' crematoriums have pollution filtering systems installed, not 100 per cent of heavy metals are filtered," he said.

THE NATION/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Seoul tests cloud-seeding to tackle air pollution

SEOUL • Seoul yesterday sent aircraft over the Yellow Sea to carry out cloud-seeding experiments in an effort to tackle air pollution that many South Koreans blame on China.

Air quality in South Korea is generally better than in its giant neighbour, the world's biggest polluter, which is periodically affected by choking bouts of filthy air.

Beijing has been seeking to tackle the scourge, which causes widespread public anger, and a recent



An aircraft ready to disperse silver iodide, a compound believed to cause rain to fall. To tackle the air pollution problem, an aircraft was sent to carry out cloud-seeding experiments over the Yellow Sea. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

study found that urban levels of PM2.5 – the tiny airborne particles considered most harmful to health – had been cut by almost a third on average over four years.

But they remain far above World Health Organisation norms and pollution levels in South Korea sometimes spike as the prevailing winds blow PM2.5 particles, referred to as "fine dust" in South Korea, across the sea between the two countries.

Many South Koreans accused China when pollution surged for three days earlier this month and yesterday the Korea Meteorological Administration sent an aircraft to disperse silver iodide, a compound believed to cause rain to fall, over the waters, known as the West Sea in South Korea.

"The experiment is to see whether the technology works and is effective in washing away fine dust," a spokesman said, adding that it was the first of 15 such tests planned for this year.

She said Seoul had "no evidence that fine dust on the West Sea is entirely from China".

Last year, South Korea shut down five ageing coal-fired power plants in a bid to improve its air quality.

But ruling party lawmaker Shin Ching-hyun pointed out that when pollution levels rose two weeks ago, they were highest on Baengnyeong-do Island, 200km west of Seoul and the closest South Korean land to China. "China's claim, that it is not entirely to blame for South Korea's air pollution problem, violates the rights of South Koreans to a healthy environment," he said.

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News analysis

Political comeback for Ahok? Not so soon

Basuki probably lying low for a while so as not to jeopardise Jokowi's re-election bid



Francis Chan

Indonesia Bureau Chief
In Jakarta

Ahok's release from prison on Thursday was widely anticipated, with many hoping that the former Jakarta governor, whose real name is Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, will make a quick return to politics amid the ongoing campaign for Indonesia's next president.

But his ardent supporters, who stuck by him while he was serving time following a conviction for blasphemy against Islam in April 2017, are set to be disappointed.

A comeback for the popular politician, it seems, remains far from his mind, at least for now.

On the cards for 52-year-old Mr Basuki, depending on the news source, is a possible foray into the oil business, hosting his own television talk show, hitting the global lecture circuit and marrying his 21-year-old sweetheart, who was once his ex-wife's aide.

Indeed, it was his rumoured engagement to former policewoman Puput Nastiti Devi which dominated the headlines and social media in the first hours of his release, as some eagle-eyed netizens focused on what looked like matching rings on the couple's fingers.

The rumours are true, according to a district official who said he had signed and prepared papers for their nuptials. All that is left, he added, was for them to set a date.

While his personal affairs are great as clickbait and tabloid fodder, it was not lost on many that his current plans post-prison seem to pale in comparison with the time when he was said to have made the shortlist to be President Joko Widodo's running mate at the upcoming election.

It was also anti-climatic for many who have been following closely his every move behind bars – particularly his musings in hand-written letters posted on Instagram and Facebook – hoping for a hint of how he plans to come out of jail fighting, possibly for Mr Joko, better known as Jokowi.

But observers and others familiar with Mr Basuki believe that his decision to lie low is likely a move to avoid jeopardising the re-election of Mr Joko, to whom he was deputy at Bali Kota, or city hall, until the latter was elected president in 2014.

After all, Mr Basuki, a Christian of Chinese descent, remains a big target for Islamic conservatives and the hardline groups that caused his political defeat at the 2017 gubernatorial election and his eventual conviction for insulting Islam.

"Islam and identity politics are still sensitive issues in the presidential election on April 17," Professor Leo Suryadinata, visiting senior fellow at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, told The Straits Times.

"Ahok is quite wise not to mention any of his plans for politics as it would be used against him or Jokowi," he added, using the President's popular moniker.

Veteran press freedom campaigner and Asia Journalism Fellow Eko Maryadi agreed, adding that there was a strong suspicion that detractors of Mr Joko, who has been accused of not being "Muslim enough", were planning to use Mr Basuki's release to stir up



Supporters of Mr Basuki Tjahaja Purnama celebrating his release from prison on Thursday. While the former Jakarta governor is expected to take some time off from the limelight to enjoy his new-found freedom and budding romance, an eventual return to politics for him is almost inevitable. PHOTO: REUTERS

anti-Chinese sentiment ahead of the polls.

So even though Mr Basuki is still widely popular among moderate and young voters, he could also make things tough for Mr Joko, who has been trying to draw the support of Muslim conservatives, who make up a huge voter bloc in Indonesia.

"Ahok is like two sides of a coin, and he knows it, and he may be why Jokowi can't win a second term smoothly," added Mr Eko. "That is why he will stay far away for now."

There is, however, another line of thinking that suggests a possible split between the two men over the President's choice of senior ulama Ma'ruf Amin as running mate.

Mr Basuki will no doubt remember that Dr Ma'ruf was the key prosecution witness who sealed his fate during his blasphemy trial, but the extent of their alleged animosity remains unclear.

What is clear, however, is that Mr Basuki is unlikely to stay out of the spotlight for long and while he is expected to take some time to enjoy his new-found freedom and budding romance, a return to politics for him is almost inevitable.

One of the reasons why it was such a surprise that he is now downplaying any involvement in Indonesian politics was that he appeared to be making plans that hinted of a comeback just prior to

his release from prison.

These include a couple of letters he wrote from prison that called for his supporters not to abstain from voting, following rumours of their disappointment over Mr Joko's pick of Dr Ma'ruf for his next vice-president.

Then there was the "Panggil saya BTP" (Call me BTP) online movement, calling for his supporters to address him by his initials instead of Ahok.

Although Mr Basuki never said it himself, a post on Instagram by his sister Fifi a day before his release indicated that the three letters also mean "bersih, transparan dan profesional", or "clean, transparent

and professional" in English.

A new political slogan calling for a clean, transparent and professional government, perhaps?

Prof Suryadinata said Mr Basuki's decision to jettison his Hakka nickname can be seen as a move to reinvent himself and emphasise his "Indonesian-ness", even as he contemplates a return to the now highly Islamicised political landscape.

"He has the stigma of a blasphemy charge," he added. "So perhaps the new name BTP is a new beginning for him and that, in itself, is also a political move."

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Outrage over proposed Manila child crime law

Activists in front of the Senate building in Manila yesterday rallying against the Bill to lower the age of criminal liability. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Rights groups condemn proposed legislation that will send offenders as young as 12 to jail

Raul Dancel
Philippines Correspondent
In Manila

A proposed law lowering the age of criminal liability from 15 to 12 is stirring up a maelstrom in the Philippines, as backers of the measure square off with activists over when children could be held responsible for their actions and sent to jail. The Bill, approved on Monday by

the House of Representatives' justice committee, originally set the age at nine. But faced with growing outrage, it conceded two days later that a more acceptable age would be 12, and passed the proposal on second reading.

Rights protection groups, however, insist that even 12 is too early an age for a child to be incarcerated. Human Rights Watch campaigner Carlos Conde said it should be at least 14, "and should under no

circumstances be reduced below that".

The Philippine Commission on Human Rights wants the age kept at 15, while United Nations organisation Unicef says that even at 16, brain functions affecting reasoning and impulse control have yet to reach maturity.

Lawmakers filed the Bill, along with a bid to reintroduce the death penalty, in 2016 to put fangs in President Rodrigo Duterte's war on the narcotics trade.

On Tuesday, Mr Duterte repeated his belief that drug gangs exploit the current law on juveniles to use children to deliver methamphetamines.

"They are the ones who deliver the drug to customers, and they are the same ones who collect the payment. That's how children are hooked into it," he said.

But Ms Lotta Sylwander, the Philippine representative at Unicef, said: "Branding children as criminals removes accountability from adults who are responsible for safeguarding them.

"If we fail to understand the underlying reasons how and why children commit crimes, we, as adults, fail our children," she added.

The proposal to lower the age of criminal liability still needs several readings before a House vote. It will then require counterpart legislation and approval of the Senate, whose members appear less supportive.

"An iron fist is not the solution. Jailing our kids and mistreating them are not solutions," said Senator Francis Pangilinan, an opposition leader and author of the current juvenile justice law.

Congress, however, is likely to back Mr Duterte, who thinks 12 is an acceptable limit.

Senator Richard Gordon, head of the Senate justice committee and an ally of the President, said 12 "is just a number as far as I am concerned. To me the proof of the pudding is in the implementation".

Mr Romeo Dongeto, head of Child Rights Network advocacy group, said "there will surely be grave repercussions for Filipino children" once the law is passed.

"Children may not only be arrested on the spot, but also risk being detained in crowded adult detention centres, even if the Bill points to separate child-caring institutions to take them in," he said.

The Bill passed by the House calls for "mandatory" confinement at "youth care facilities" for children who commit serious crimes such as murder, rape, arson and car theft.

Many of these facilities are "worse than jail cells", said Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council executive director Tricia Oco.


"They don't have programmes, beds and cabinets. The children there are told not to talk or to do anything, so some do self-harm because they're very bored."

There are also not enough shelters to take in all those who will be arrested once the lower age limit takes effect. Out of 113 facilities required under the law, only 55 have been built, and there are no provisions for more in the 2019 Budget.

Mr Dongeto said from 1995 to 2000, prior to the current juvenile justice law, one child was arrested per hour for offences as petty as snatching a candy.

"Revamping the law may - intentionally or unintentionally - revert us to this situation," he added.

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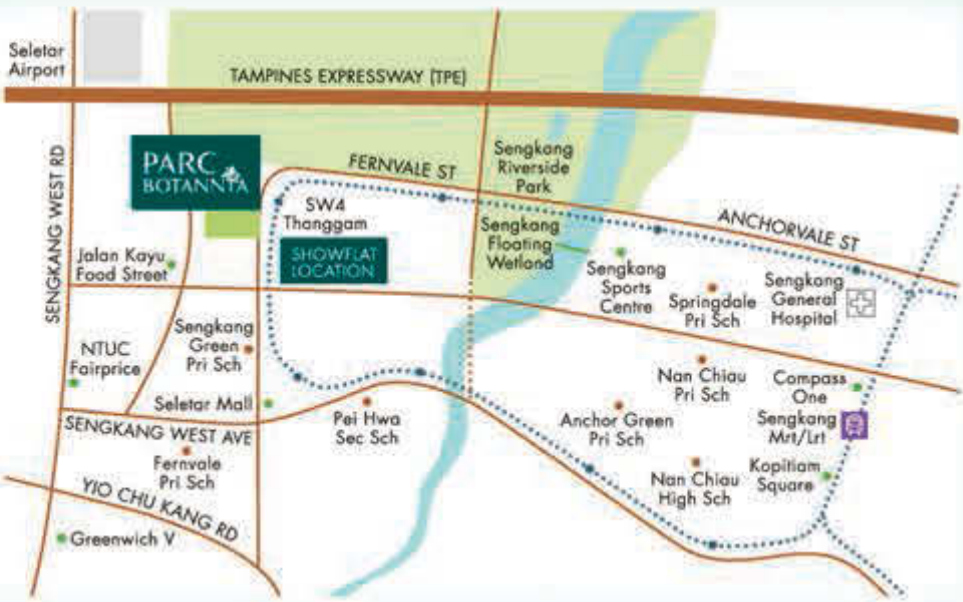
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Age limits elsewhere

The minimum age of criminal responsibility varies from nation to nation, and even from state to state.

Singapore sets it at seven. There is a proposal to bring it up to 10. The minimum age is also seven in India and Brunei.

It is eight in Indonesia and 16 in Vietnam and Laos. Malaysia sets it at 10, but dispenses with the limit for violations of its Internal Security Act.

In China, the age limit is 16, but in Hong Kong, it is 10. It is 14 in North and South Korea, the same as in Japan.

Among developed Western nations, the age limit is 10 in England and Wales, 12 in Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands, 14 in Spain and Italy, and 15 in Denmark. The United States lets its 50 states set their own age limit, but only 17 have done so. The lowest is seven and the highest, 10.

Raul Dancel



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Hot topic in Cameron Highlands by-election

Polls cast spotlight on environmental woes caused by increased farming in the area

Trinna Leong
Malaysia Correspondent
In Cameron Highlands

Ahead of a by-election today, things are heating up in a tourist destination famous for its tea plantations and cool air.

Up to 32,009 registered voters in Cameron Highlands will pick a new Member of Parliament after an elec-

tion court ruled that a Barisan Nasional candidate who narrowly won the federal seat in last May's general election had won as a result of bribery.

It is a four-way contest with a candidate each from the opposition coalition BN and ruling Pakatan Harapan alliance, and two independents. The attention on Cameron Highlands has shone the spotlight on problems that have been brew-

ing in the tourist town, which is a significant supplier of vegetables to other parts of Malaysia as well as Singapore.

For years, temperatures have been rising in Cameron Highlands as jungles are cleared for more farms growing vegetables, straw-

berries and flowers. About 6,052ha of farmland occupy the valleys and slopes of Cameron Highlands, up from around 5,500ha in 2005.

White plastic roofs covering cultivated land have sprouted up across what was once a green landscape of rainforest trees.



Large farms with white roofs in the Blue Valley region of Cameron Highlands, taking over what was once covered by rainforest.
ST PHOTO: TRINNA LEONG

The increase in farming activity has led to landslides, water sources being contaminated by the rampant use of pesticides and the indigenous Orang Asli people being pushed out of their homeland.

A 2014 study by the National University of Malaysia found traces of banned pesticides in the water catchment and riverine system of Cameron Highlands.

used in a controlled manner – and allowing these crops to be sold at higher prices.

“With modernised farming methods, productivity per acre is increased so there’s no need to always clear new land for farming. That can cut down the environmental damage to the area,” Mr Sim told The Straits Times.

“But if consumers continue to ask for lower prices without opting for organic or sustainable farming products, then the old traditional farming methods would be used,” he said. “It’s quick and easy to just spray (pesticides) and sell.”

But farmers see little benefit in investing in more productive methods. Farmland falls under the state government, with most farms on a short-term lease bound by an annual renewal.

The absence of a long-term lease option means that land-clearing has become the predominant practice in Cameron Highlands. That, in turn, has affected the indigenous Orang Asli, whose people have lived in the forest in the highlands for generations.

Orang Asli villages are slowly squeezed into smaller areas as land they once called home is increasingly rented out by the government to farmers.

Mr Seman Bahtom, 47, an odd-job worker living in the Sungai Tiang village, said the village houses residents from two other villages who had to give way to farms about 20 years ago. “We have no space, not even to bury the dead,” he said. “One house can have three families living together. It’s like a sardine house.”

The villages also have problems with water, as their only source of water is a nearby stream located next to a farm. On rainy days, the water in the stream becomes murky like milk tea.

Residents worry about the effects of the area’s longstanding environmental woes, noting that diseases are becoming more common.

Mr Ramakrishnan of Reach said it is worrying to hear about families with members suffering from cancer, miscarriages and children born handicapped.

Mr Fung, the farmer, echoed the concern of many in the area when he said: “Everyone who lives here has a friend who has had cancer.”

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KL police seeking Jho Low's parents, others

S'porean among the four people wanted; Goldman Sachs' law firm raided for papers

KUALA LUMPUR • Malaysia's police are seeking Jho Low's parents, an associate and a Singaporean as they widen their search for evidence of possible wrongdoing in their investigation into the scandal-ridden Malaysia Development Berhad (IMDB).

The authorities are calling for information on Low's parents, Low Hock Peng and Goh Gaik Ewe, as well as Tan Kim Loong, an associate of Low's, the police said in a statement yesterday. They are also seeking Ms Shabnam Naraindas Daswani, a Singaporean who is also known as Natasha Mirpuri.

Low's father and Tan, also known as Eric Tan, have already been named by the police as part of their probe into the Malaysian state fund,

which lies at the centre of a massive scandal that has ensnared Goldman Sachs Group and prompted investigations across the globe.

Tan is facing joint charges with Jho Low over allegedly receiving illicit funds, while the police have requested Interpol's help to track down Low and his father.

United States prosecutors have painted Jho Low as the alleged mastermind of a scheme to siphon money from IMDB into personal accounts disguised to look like legitimate businesses, and give some of those funds to officials as kickbacks. He has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Goh had been named in a US court filing last November in a warrant to seize a pair of diamond earrings and



Malaysian police are calling for information on (from left) Low's parents, Goh Gaik Ewe and Low Hock Peng; Tan Kim Loong, an associate of Low's; and Singaporean Shabnam Naraindas Daswani, also known as Natasha Mirpuri.

a matching diamond ring believed to be linked to IMDB, Malaysiakini news website said on Nov 6.

The filing said the authorities were seeking cooperation from Thailand, where they believed Goh resided, the report said.

Malaysia's police did not explain why they are seeking Ms Mirpuri, who was a dress designer.

Meanwhile, police have also asked law firms to turn over documents related to IMDB bond sales

that Goldman Sachs arranged, as part of an investigation involving the US lender.

Police raided Rahmat Lim & Partners, the Malaysian law firm that represented Goldman Sachs in the deals, on Thursday morning to search for the documents, The Edge newspaper reported, citing a person it did not identify.

Mr Saiful Azly Kamaruddin, acting director of the police's commercial crime investigation depart-

ment, confirmed the raid.

In an e-mailed statement late on Thursday, Rahmat Lim & Partners, which acted as Malaysian legal counsel for Goldman Sachs in support of an unnamed British law firm, confirmed that the police went to its offices, and that it had already given the police documents that were not subject to attorney-client privilege.

"We have provided our fullest cooperation to the police, and remain fully committed to cooperating with them, within the confines of the law," it said in the note.

Goldman Sachs is facing its first criminal charges related to its role in arranging a US\$6.5 billion (S\$8.8 billion) bond issue for the scandal-plagued state investment fund IMDB. Malaysian prosecutors allege that the bank misled investors in the three bond sales while knowing that the money raised would be misappropriated. The bank has said it will vigorously defend itself against the allegations.

Investigators obtained a court order to raid Rahmat Lim & Partners after the firm refused to hand over the requested documents, according to The Edge. Wong & Partners, which represented IMDB in the deals, had already provided documents to the police, the report said.

A spokesman for Wong & Partners said it does not comment on ongoing investigations, as per its policy. BLOOMBERG



Madam Maimunah Abdul Hamid was the pillion rider on the superbike driven by her husband, Mr Abdul Rahim Mohd. PHOTO: FACEBOOK/MAIMUNAH ABDUL HAMID

S'porean killed in superbike crash near Ipoh

Nadirah H. Rodzi
Malaysia Correspondent
In Kuala Lumpur

A Singaporean woman died on the spot when the superbike she was on skidded and crashed into the road divider near the Menora Tunnel on Malaysia's North-South Expressway.

The 55-year-old pillion rider, identified as Madam Maimunah Abdul Hamid, was travelling north with her husband, Mr Abdul Rahim Mohd – also a Singaporean – when the accident occurred at 4.45am yesterday.

The Menora Tunnel, which forms part of the North-South Expressway, is located about 20km north of Ipoh, the capital of Perak state.

"The woman was pronounced dead at the scene by a medical team, while the male victim suffered injuries to his right shoulder and right ankle," said Ipoh police chief Mohd Ali Tamby.

"The body was sent to the Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital for a post-mortem," he added.

Investigations revealed that the impact of the accident caused Madam Maimunah to be thrown off the high-powered vehicle. She landed in the bushes on the left shoulder of the expressway.

Mr Abdul Rahim, who was driving the bike, fell in the middle of the road.

The authorities received a distress call alerting them to the incident at 5.18am. The rescue operation ended at 6.49am.

The case is being investigated under Section 41 (1) of the Road Transport Act 1987 on causing death by reckless or dangerous driving.

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Voters approve Muslim self-rule in Philippines' troubled south



MILF leader Murad Ebrahim is pleased that 1.7 million voted in favour of the Bangsamoro region.

MANILA • Voters have decisively approved a new Muslim-led region in the Philippines' south, which is hoped will bring a measure of peace after decades of fighting killed thousands and mired the area in poverty.

The results, announced yesterday, will begin the process of the Catholic-majority nation's largest rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), laying down its weapons and assuming political power.

About 150,000 people were killed in the rebellion that began in 1970s and aimed to push the government to grant independence to a Muslim minority concentrated on the southern island of Mindanao.

"We are very happy about the overwhelming support of the people," said MILF leader Murad Ebrahim. "It was a landslide. There's been nothing like this."

Voters, who were expected to back the so-called Bangsamoro region, delivered a convincing result of about 1.7 million in favour and about 254,600 against, according to official results from the Philippines elections commission.

A handful of smaller areas, which were not included in Monday's referendum due to administrative delays, are set to vote on Feb 6 on whether to join.

Rebels and the government in Manila hope a new peaceful



Bangsamoro will finally draw the investment needed to pull the region from the brutal poverty that makes it a hot spot for radical recruitment.

As part of the peace process, the MILF has joined the government in battling the hardline factions aligned to terror group Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) waging guerilla campaigns in the southern Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte, himself from Mindanao, has been a staunch supporter of Bangsamoro and signed the law last year paving the way for the vote.

Under the terms of the law which lays out the region's powers, Bangsamoro will get US\$950 million (S\$1.29 billion) in development funds over the next 10 years, as well

as a chunk of the tax revenue generated within its borders and national receipts.

Manila will keep control over the police, but it is hoped that close cooperation on security with Bangsamoro's leaders will help get a handle on the region's endemic lawlessness.

Muslim rebels have long been battling for independence or autonomy on Mindanao, which they regard as their ancestral homeland dating back to when Arab traders arrived there in the 13th century.

The Bangsamoro region will expand and supersede an existing Muslim-led region which struggled to govern effectively due to limited powers and was hamstrung by alleged corruption.

After voters' approval, the rebels are to immediately demobilise a third of their fighters, which the group said number about 30,000.

MILF has begun an inventory of its weapons, which will not be destroyed but rather placed in a depot guarded by former MILF fighters and government security forces.

Laying down their guns may prove to be a delicate process for rebels living in a region with extremely limited rule of law, where being armed is also a way to protect oneself and family from crime.

Transitioning from rebellion to governance also promises to carry challenges for rebels who have limited experience in the difficulties of politics and bureaucracy.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Philippine troops on armoured vehicles patrolling Jolo town, on Sulu island, on Tuesday, a day after the vote for self-rule. Rebels and Manila hope a new peaceful Bangsamoro will draw the investment needed to pull the region from poverty. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

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Taking a stand against Macedonia name change



A protestor standing amid smoke from tear gas thrown by riot police in Athens on Thursday during a demonstration against an agreement to rename Greece's neighbour as the Republic of North Macedonia. Greece's Parliament postponed for several hours on Thursday a historic vote on a deal to change the name of former Yugoslav republic Macedonia and end one of the world's longest diplomatic disputes. Most Greeks oppose the term "Macedonia" being used in any pact as they fear it could lead to territorial claims over Greece's largest northern province of Macedonia. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Trump long-time ally Stone arrested, faces seven charges

WASHINGTON • Roger Stone, United States President Donald Trump's long-time ally and presidential campaign adviser, was arrested yesterday, charged with obstruction, witness tampering and making false statements, according to a grand jury indictment made

public by US Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office. Stone, who has repeatedly said that he was likely to be indicted, was scheduled to appear at the federal courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, later yesterday, Mr Mueller's office said.

Stone, 66, has faced scrutiny for his support for Mr Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, when he implied that he had access to information obtained by hackers that could embarrass Democrats, including Mr Trump's rival for the White House, Mrs Hillary Clinton.

"This has been rumoured to be coming down for several months, so Roger and his legal team are ready to fight these charges in court," Mr Michael Caputo, a long-time Stone associate and former Trump campaign adviser, told Reuters.

"They can't prove collusion or conspiracy because it doesn't exist, so they're going after him personally. He will be vindicated."

Stone, who was indicted on Thursday, faces one count of obstruction of an official proceeding, five counts of making false statements and one count of witness tampering, according to the Special Counsel's Office.

CNN, in a video of the arrest, showed a heavily armed FBI team taking Stone away from his home in the early hours of yesterday and Stone surrendering without any issue.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said in an interview with CNN that the indictment is unrelated to the President or the White House.

"The charges brought against Mr Stone have nothing to do with the President, has nothing to do with White House. The President did nothing wrong."

According to the indictment, Stone had talked to senior Trump campaign officials about what was called Organisation 1, "and information it might have had that would be damaging to the Clinton Campaign". Organisation 1 matches descriptions of Wikileaks, which is dedicated to publishing secret and classified information provided by anonymous sources.

Stone was also "contacted by senior Trump campaign officials to inquire about future releases" by Organisation 1, according to the indictment.

Additionally, Stone "took steps to obstruct" investigations by intelligence committees in the House of Representatives and Senate into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, prosecutors said.

He also tried to persuade a witness to provide false testimony and withhold information from the congressional investigations, the indictment said. REUTERS



Stone has faced scrutiny for his support for Mr Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, when he implied he had access to information obtained by hackers that could embarrass Democrats, including Mr Trump's rival for the White House, Mrs Hillary Clinton.

News analysis

The Brexit effect on British universities

Drop in enrolments from Europe, potential loss of EU research funds among concerns



Jonathan Eyal
Global Affairs Correspondent
In London

With just two months remaining before Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union, university leaders have warned that the uncertainty about the terms and conditions for this separation from Europe risks inflicting on Britain "an academic, cultural and scientific setback from which it would take decades to recover".

The warning comes as the latest statistics indicate a substantial drop in the number of EU students enrolling in British universities, threatening a major squeeze on the higher education sector ahead of Brexit, as the process of Britain's separation from the EU is popularly known.

Currently, a national of any EU nation is treated as a domestic student and pays the same tuition fee, capped at £9,250 (\$16,426) per year for undergraduate courses at universities in England. Students from outside the EU, however, may be charged anywhere between £10,000 and £38,000, depending on the course.

The British government has promised to retain the privileges for EU students this year. But after 2019, EU students will be reclassified as "overseas" and subject to markedly higher fees. The British government initially argued that this would provide the universities with a "Brexit boost", as revenues per student would increase.

For the moment, however, all that seems to be happening is that new student admission numbers from Europe are in decline. Figures from the so-called Russell Group, an association comprising 24 of Britain's top universities, indicate that new undergraduate enrolments from EU citizens fell for the first time in decades, and stood at only 23,310 last year, 3 per cent down in comparison with 2017 admissions. EU enrolments at postgraduate degree courses fell more steeply, by 9 per cent last year.

"It's fair to assume that uncertainty over Brexit and the UK's future relationship with

Europe could be a significant factor. The drop in postgraduate research courses is especially troubling - these students contribute directly to the UK's research capacity," says Dr Hollie Chandler, a senior policy analyst for the Russell Group.

The squeeze on university budgets is made worse by the potential loss of EU research funds, which are currently worth around £1 billion a year for British universities. And quite apart from the money, there is also the risk of a brain drain, as talented academics may prefer to move to universities on mainland Europe where governments bear a greater share of university funding and access to EU research funds is not in danger.

Some top British universities are trying to forestall pressures through innovative partnerships. The University of York in northern England has just signed an agreement with Maastricht University in the Netherlands which will allow the staff of both establishments to move freely between each other, and envisages running joint research.

Meanwhile, Imperial College London has teamed up with France's National Centre for Scientific Research, while the London School of Economics has a longstanding partnership with Sciences Po, one of France's top educational establishments. The hope is that these would allow British universities to continue tapping EU funds, as well as offer greater certainty for EU citizens wishing to study in the UK.

British university bosses are also keen to emphasise the higher purpose of their rush to forge formal alliances with European counterparts. "We are not at all apologetic about this", says Professor Saul Tendler, York University's vice-chancellor, who adds, "we are internationalists, we value international collaboration in higher education".

Britain's university sector employs around one million people and contributes around £27 billion to the country's economy, so its appeals should command serious government attention.

But at least for the moment, the universities' appeal attracted no formal government response. The Cabinet of Prime Minister Theresa May is too busy trying to agree on what it wants from Brexit, and the plight of the universities is not high on ministers' agendas.

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Find common ground, Queen urges politicians

LONDON • Queen Elizabeth has sent a delicately coded message to Britain's factious political class over Brexit, urging lawmakers to seek common ground and grasp the big picture to resolve the crisis.

With the clock ticking down to March 29, the date set in law for Britain to leave the European Union, the United Kingdom is in the deepest political crisis it has experienced in half a century as it grapples with how, or even whether, to exit the European project it joined in 1973.

While the monarch, 92, did not mention Brexit explicitly in an annual speech to her local Women's Institute in Norfolk, she said every generation faced "fresh challenges and opportunities."

"As we look for new answers in the modern age, I for one prefer the tried and tested recipes, like speaking well of each other and respecting different points of view; coming together to seek out the common ground; and never losing sight of the bigger picture,"

the Queen said.

The remarks are a signal to politicians to sort out the turmoil that has pushed the world's fifth-largest economy to the brink.

Buckingham Palace declined to comment, though the British media was clear about the significance of her remarks. The Times' headline read: "End Brexit feud, Queen tells warring politicians".

As head of state, the Queen remains neutral on politics in public and is unable to vote, though ahead of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, she made a plea for Scots to think carefully about their future.

The future of Brexit remains unpredictable. Options range from a disorderly exit that would spook investors across the world to a new referendum that could reverse the process.

Prime Minister Theresa May is engaged in a last-ditch bid to win support for a tweaked divorce deal after parliament this month crushed the original plan. REUTERS

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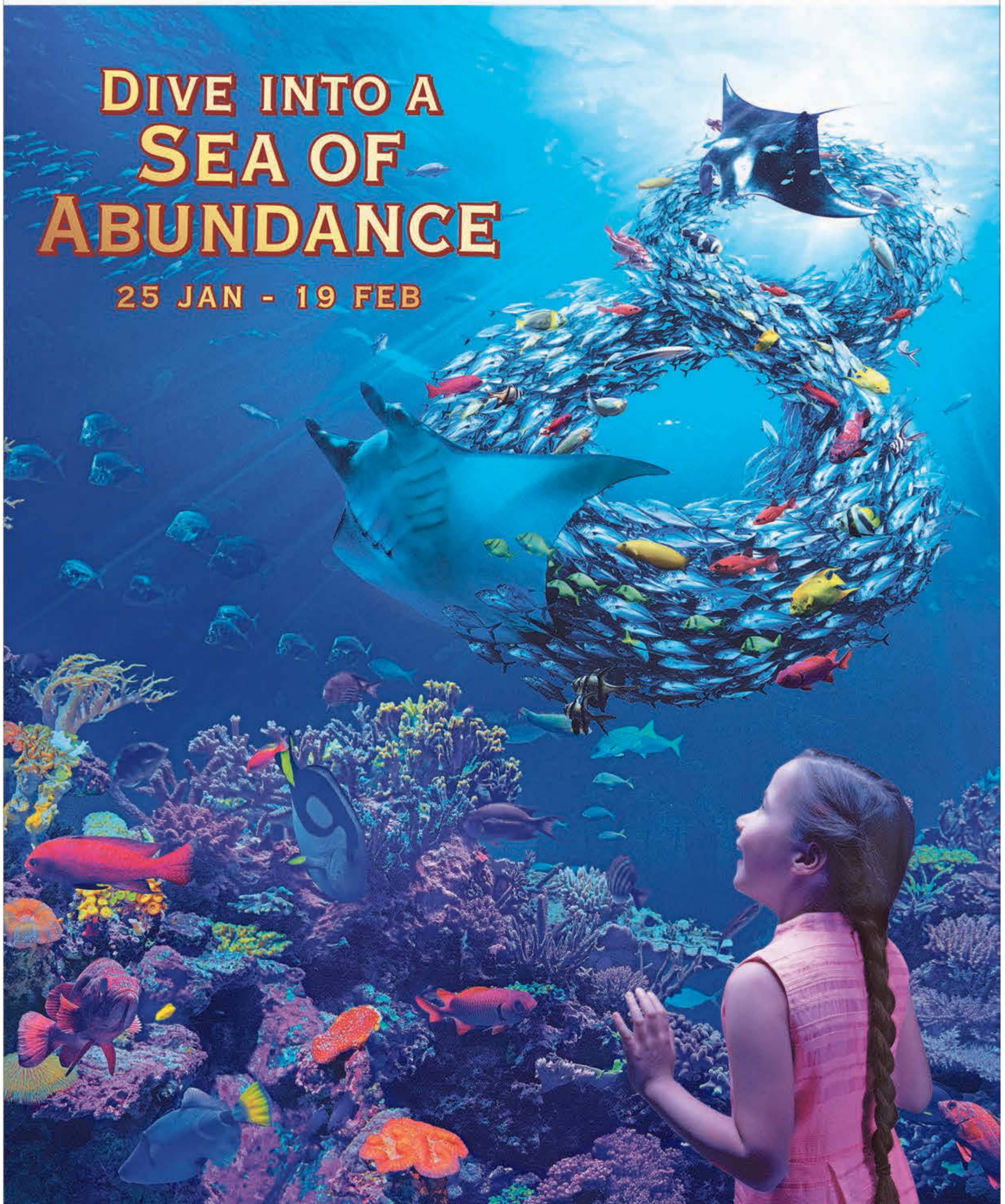
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WORLD

Talks signal possible end to US govt shutdown

But Trump won't budge from his demands for funding to build wall at Mexico border

TRUMP'S 'SECRET WEAPON'?

I have other alternatives if I have to, and I'll use other alternatives if I have to.



US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, who told reporters what he would do if a stopgap spending Bill passed without wall money.

WASHINGTON • New negotiations between the Senate's top Republicans and Democrats and the White House signalled the potential for a deal to end the partial government shutdown even as US President Donald Trump continued to insist on money for a border wall that Democrats reject.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who until now has publicly sat on the sidelines during the 35-day government shutdown, opened negotiations with Minority Leader Chuck Schumer on Thursday after the Chamber blocked two rival spending Bills to reopen the government.

"We're talking, we're talking," said Mr Schumer after emerging from Mr McConnell's office.

Still, there's no clear path to end the shutdown as the White House and Democrats are still at odds over Mr Trump's demands to fund a wall on the US-Mexico border. Mr Trump has threatened to veto legislation that doesn't include wall funding.

A bipartisan group of senators

proposed a three-week spending plan designed to buy time for congressional negotiations over border-security expenditure.

But White House spokesman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on Thursday it would have to include a "large down payment on the wall".

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi quickly rejected that proposal. And a Schumer spokesman, Mr Justin Goodman, said the minority leader "and Senate Democrats have made clear to Leader McConnell and Republicans that they will not support funding for the wall, pro-rated or otherwise".

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a Trump ally, said he hoped a deal could be reached after he spoke with the President. He said a

temporary measure would have to contain additional provisions to satisfy both sides: funding for a "wall/barrier" to please Mr Trump and disaster aid to please Democrats.

Mr Trump told reporters at the White House that if a stopgap spending Bill passed without wall money, "I have other alternatives if I have to, and I'll use other alternatives if I have to".

Mr Trump didn't elaborate, but he may have been referring to declaring an emergency that would attempt to circumvent Congress by tapping unspent appropriations to pay for the wall.

House Democrats planned to unveil a proposal yesterday for securing the border without erecting new barriers. Homeland Security

Committee chairman Bennie Thompson of Mississippi said he expects it to call for more than US\$5.7 billion (S\$7.7 billion) in spending on technology, personnel and other aspects of security.

The talks were triggered after the Senate rejected two proposals – one by Mr Trump and one by Democrats – intended to reopen the government. They were the first votes the Senate has taken on funding the government since the Dec 22 start of the shutdown, now the longest in modern US history.

Mr Schumer said the pain inflicted by the shutdown is "getting deeper and deeper every day", with 800,000 federal employees set to miss a second pay cheque yesterday. BLOOMBERG



A federal employee with a protest message on a paper plate as the US government continues its shutdown on Thursday, the longest in US history. He and his co-workers face the prospect of another month with no wages. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Flights into NY airport halted over worker shortage

DALLAS • The US authorities halted flights into New York's LaGuardia Airport yesterday because of a shortage of air-traffic control staff, escalating the pressure on President Donald Trump and lawmakers to end the government shutdown.

A lack of workers at an air-traffic control facility in the Washington area prompted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to order a ground stop yesterday at LaGuardia, one of the busiest US transportation hubs.

Flights were halted shortly before 10am local time (11pm Singapore time), the BBC reported.

Flights at other East Coast airports such as Washington's Reagan National, Newark Liberty International and Philadelphia International were also delayed yesterday.

The flight disruptions underscored the rising impact of the government shutdown as the closing dragged into the 35th day. JetBlue Airways chief executive Robin Hayes warned that the risk to the aviation system was reaching a "tipping point".

Some 420,000 federal workers, including Transportation Security Administration screeners and air traffic controllers, have been deemed essential and told to go to work even though they are not receiving regular pay.

A staffing shortage was also reported at a facility overseeing air traffic in Jacksonville, Florida, said an FAA website. BLOOMBERG

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Venezuela's National Assembly head Juan Guaidó (above) proclaimed himself "acting president" on Wednesday but President Nicolás Maduro (right) still has the loyalty of the powerful military. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Maduro gets military backing in Venezuela power struggle

Embattled President recalls diplomats in US after Washington backs his challenger

CARACAS • Venezuela's powerful military has thrown its weight behind President Nicolás Maduro as the US-backed opposition leader Juan Guaidó pressed a direct challenge to his authority, and the fate of the crisis-wracked country hung in the balance.

As the death toll from days of street protests jumped to 26, a defiant Mr Maduro announced the clo-

sure of Venezuela's embassy and consulates in the United States, a day after President Donald Trump's administration declared his regime "illegitimate".

The oil-rich but economically devastated country was plunged into uncertainty on Wednesday when Mr Guaidó, the 35-year-old head of the National Assembly, proclaimed himself "acting president" – earn-

ing swift endorsement from Washington and a dozen regional powers, including Brazil, Argentina and Colombia.

Both Russia and China have thrown their weight behind the embattled Mr Maduro, who has also retained the support of Mexico, Cuba and Bolivia.

Mr Maduro's re-election last year was contested by the opposition, and criticised internationally – but the socialist leader has until now retained the loyalty of the powerful military.

Flanked by military top brass on

Thursday, Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino, himself a general, declared the 56-year-old Mr Maduro "the legitimate president" – and vowed to defend his authority against an attempted "coup d'état".

Following Mr Padrino's lead, eight generals in turn reiterated their "absolute loyalty and subordination" to the socialist leader in messages carried on state television.

And the Supreme Court – made up of regime loyalists – doubled down by reaffirming its allegiance to Mr Maduro's "legitimate authority."

"A coup is brewing in Venezuela

with the consent of foreign governments," charged the court's president, Judge Maikel Moreno.

Meanwhile, a top US official said on Thursday that the US is seeking to ensure that Venezuelan oil revenue goes to Mr Guaidó, and to cut off money from Mr Maduro.

Although short on details, the announcement signals that Washington is willing to go beyond traditional diplomatic measures and will seek to drain cash from Mr Maduro's government, which is already struggling under an unprecedented economic meltdown.

Such a move would significantly strengthen the hand of Mr Guaidó.

"What we're focusing on today is disconnecting the illegitimate Maduro regime from the sources of his revenues," National Security Adviser John Bolton told reporters at the White House.

"We think consistent with our recognition of Juan Guaidó as the constitutional interim president of Venezuela that those revenues should go to the legitimate government."

In a Skype interview with Univision, Mr Guaidó said he did not rule out including Mr Maduro in an amnesty he is offering military and civilian officials who lead a transition in Venezuela. But he said the option would have to be evaluated because, he said, Mr Maduro is responsible for the death of protesters.

He said he would work to guarantee humanitarian aid and implement new economic measures to ratchet up pressure.

"Our challenge is to secure free elections, and we want them as soon as possible. But we are living in a dictatorship," he said, from an undisclosed location.

Eurasia Group analysts noted that while international recognition of Mr Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president cemented his position as the main opposition leader, he had failed to win over senior elements of the military.

In that light, "Maduro's fall does not appear imminent", the consultancy's analysts wrote.

In Washington, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo kept up the pressure on the leftist leader, as the US called for an emergency UN Security Council meeting on the crisis.

"The time for debate is done. The regime of former president Nicolás Maduro is illegitimate," Mr Pompeo said in a speech to the Organisation of American States.

A furious Mr Maduro on Wednesday issued US diplomats a 72-hour deadline to leave the country, and on Thursday, said he was recalling all Venezuelan diplomats from the US.

The US State Department ordered its non-emergency staff to leave Venezuela but refused to comply with a full expulsion, saying it would maintain diplomatic ties with "the government of interim President Guaidó".

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

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SCIENCE

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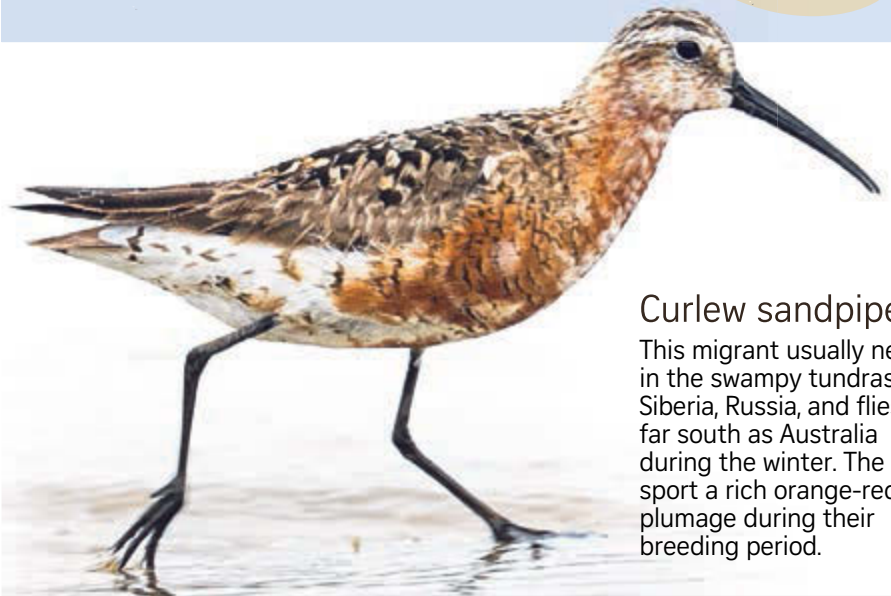
Over 2,000 birds from more than 30 species make their way down from the Arctic to Singapore every year to escape the winter chill. They take cues from the lengths of days, the earth's magnetic field, their recognition of the night sky, and natural landmarks, to accomplish one of nature's greatest feats, with many birds making a round-trip journey of some 14,000km. Many of these species do so via the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, the largest of the five major flyways around the world, which connects 22 countries in regions such as South-east Asia, North America and North-east Asia.



Pacific golden plover
Native to Alaska and northern Siberia, the Pacific golden plover can fly more than 3,000km in a single, non-stop flight. It is also considered by the National Audubon Society as a "climate endangered" bird, as its wintering areas on the Pacific islands are vulnerable to sea level rise. This is one of the most common Arctic-breeding shorebirds in Singapore.



Arctic warbler
This bird has a distinct trill, and is widespread in Singapore. It has even been found in the middle of Shenton Way, Orchard Road and in Housing Board estates. In the Arctic, tens of millions of this bird can be found breeding there. It is the most abundant and ubiquitous of the Arctic-breeding birds to be found in Singapore, said Dr Yong Ding Li of environmental group BirdLife International.



Curlew sandpiper
This migrant usually nests in the swampy tundras of Siberia, Russia, and flies as far south as Australia during the winter. The birds sport a rich orange-red plumage during their breeding period.



Grey-tailed tattler
Often found in mudflats, reefs and sandy beaches, this bird is also considered an uncommon migrant in Singapore.



Aleutian tern
This seabird feeds by plunging into the water to catch its prey. It is considered an uncommon migrant in Singapore, and is best seen foraging in the Singapore Strait south of the mainland.

Sources: YONG DING LI/BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, SINGAPORE BIRDS PHOTOS: CHENG HENG YEE, CHOY WAI MUN, FRANCIS YAP, TIAH KHEE LEE, YONG DING LI STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Singapore a key stopover for Arctic ‘feats of nature’

Scientists working to secure migratory birds’ key sites along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway for conservation

Audrey Tan
Environment Correspondent

The diminutive Arctic bird is not to be underestimated. Though small, these feathered creatures are capable of accomplishing one of nature's greatest feats, flying more than 7,000km from the icy north down to the tropics to escape the winter chill. Singapore is currently in the midst of its migratory bird season, which is between October and March. About 2,000 migratory birds visit Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve to "refuel" every year, said Dr Adrian Loo, group director for conservation at the National Parks Board (NParks). The reserve, which is located in north-western Singapore, is surrounded by mudflats, marshes, mangroves and coasts, which provide a buffet of molluscs, crustaceans and worms for the birds to feast on, he said. Sungei Buloh is recognised inter-

nationally as an important site for migratory birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which stretches from the Arctic to Australia and New Zealand. To make the long journey easier for these migratory birds, scientists are now working to identify key stopover sites and take action to secure them for conservation, said Dr Yong Ding Li, flyways coordinator at BirdLife International, a conservation group. The flights of these birds, with their abilities to endure long flights over varied routes, are feats of nature, said Dr Yong, but scientists are only beginning to understand them better. "This is thanks to an increasingly varied array of tracking gadgets that we can attach to the birds," he added. For example, between March 2017 and April last year, NParks tagged 15 migratory shorebirds from five different species with satellite trackers in an ongoing programme. They found that four species – the whimbrel, common green-

shank, and Pacific golden and grey plovers – bred in northern Russia, within or close to the Arctic Circle. The fifth, the common redshank, bred in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in China. The five species were chosen as

COORDINATION ESSENTIAL
If we make a lot of effort to conserve some parts of the flyway and not other parts, then migratory birds will still suffer, because after all, their migratory routes link up this chain of sites.

DR YONG DING LI, flyways coordinator at conservation group BirdLife International, on why conservation action had to be coordinated across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

they were large enough to carry the weight of the tracker, which is about 5g, or around 3 per cent or less of the body weight of the birds, said Dr Loo. The data showed that the birds often stopped at inland and coastal wetlands in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, China, North Korea and Russia. Dr Loo said NParks engages with its counterparts managing wetlands in some of these areas – such as the Hong Kong Wetland Park and the Pulau Kukup National Park in Malaysia – to exchange information on the migratory patterns and requirements of the shorebirds. "This enables us to better formulate conservation strategies for our wetlands," he said. NParks, for example, has taken steps to ensure Singapore remains a conducive stopover point for migratory birds. Water levels in the ponds at Sungei Buloh are manually controlled to provide high tide roost sites, while overgrown vegetation is regularly removed to provide

open spaces for the migratory shorebirds, said Dr Loo. "NParks also works with other agencies to extend the reserve to include buffer zones and complementary wetlands such as the Kranji Marshes and the Mandai Mangrove and Mudflat," he said. In October last year, NParks announced that the Mandai Mangrove and Mudflat would be conserved as a nature park. Dr Yong of BirdLife International said it was important that governments realise the significance of these sites. However, he stressed that conservation action had to be coordinated across the flyway – an effort that his organisation is undertaking with partner organisations in various countries. He said: "If we make a lot of effort to conserve some parts of the flyway and not other parts, then migratory birds will still suffer, because after all, their migratory routes link up this chain of sites."

audreyt@sph.com.sg

ScienceTalk

What happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic

Warming of polar region will lead to climate changes that will impact the rest of the world

Benjamin Horton

Contrary to the famous line “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas”, global warming is changing the Arctic in ways that will impact our climate and our world.

Its climate is changing at an accelerated pace compared with the rest of the world. Temperatures there, for instance, have risen 2.3 deg C since the 1970s, nearly twice the rate of the rest of the world. The Arctic region acts as a refrigerator for the rest of the world. It gives off more heat to space than it absorbs from outside, which helps cool the planet.

THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

The mounting evidence of climate change in the Arctic motivated international organisations to call for a study of its climate. The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states, indigenous communities and other inhabitants on common issues, in particular, sustainable development and environmental protection. Singapore has been an observer in the council since 2013.

I was fortunate to represent Singapore alongside our Government at Arctic Council meetings in Berlin and St Petersburg last year. There are more meetings in the next few years as the urgency for action on climate change intensifies.

GLOBAL IMPACT OF ARCTIC CLIMATE

The large-scale changes in the Arctic climate system exert a strong influence throughout the global climate system. For example, less sea ice leads to altered temperature and salinity in seawater, which in turn affect global ocean circulation patterns; these patterns play a major role in determining the climate in regions all over the world. Such alterations will also affect biodiversity far outside the Arctic.

The temperature difference between the cold Arctic and warmer regions in the south in autumn and winter drives the jet stream, which shapes and propels the weather systems of the Northern Hemisphere.

But the temperature difference has decreased, and this affects the speed of the jet stream. One apparent result is that weather systems spend more time over certain regions, leading to extreme snowfall, drought and heatwaves.

In addition, the warming of the Arctic allows the jet stream to meander more, bringing cold Arctic air farther south and allowing warm air to penetrate farther north, leading to new record high and low temperatures last year.

For example, a major winter storm hit the United States Atlantic coast in early January last year, battering coastal areas with heavy snow, blizzards and strong winds. Boston suffered coastal flooding after it saw the highest tide since 1921. In contrast, record high temperatures have been set across much of the world last summer.

Algeria experienced the hottest temperature reliably registered in Africa at a staggering 51.3 deg C.

The effect of thawing permafrost on the carbon cycle is another crucial aspect of how climate evolves worldwide. Permafrost in the Arctic will thaw as a consequence of increasing temperatures in the soil, oceans, rivers and lakes that overlie the frozen ground. Carbon stored in the permafrost may then be released as carbon dioxide and methane, increasing the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and hastening global warming.

The Arctic permafrost contains about 1.7 trillion tonnes of carbon – more than all that human activity has generated since the start of the Industrial Revolution. A study in Canada estimated that the thawing of its permafrost alone would release 75 million to 560 million tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere before 2100, and increase the earth’s temperature by 0.5 deg C in addition to the warming that is already projected.

MELTING SEA ICE AND MARITIME TRADE

The changing Arctic climate can be illustrated clearly in the melting sea ice. Sea ice is simply frozen ocean wa-

ter. Every year, the sea ice blanketing the Arctic Ocean and surrounding seas thickens and expands in autumn and winter, reaching its maximum yearly extent between late Feb-

ruary and early April. The ice then thins and shrinks in spring and summer until it reaches its annual minimum extent in September.

The last four years saw nearly equally low extents in winter and continued the decades-long trend of diminishing sea ice in the Arctic. Last year’s maximum extent was

1.16 million sq km – an area about 1,600 times larger than Singapore – and below the 1981 to 2010 average.

The decline of the Arctic sea ice has myriad effects, from changes in climate and weather patterns to impacts on the plants and animals dependent on the ice, and to the indigenous human communities that rely on them.

Sea ice (plus glaciers and the Greenland ice sheet) reflects a high proportion of the sun’s energy into space. As the Arctic loses snow and ice, bare rock and water absorb more and more of this energy, making the earth ever warmer. This is called the albedo effect.

The disappearing ice is also altering shipping routes, creating opportunities for shorter trade links between South-east Asia, Europe and the Atlantic coast of North America via the Arctic. For example, voyages from South-east Asia to the United Kingdom could save 10 to 12 days by using transarctic routes instead of the Suez Canal route.



Professor Benjamin Horton speaking on sea-level rise at the “Arctic: Today and the Future” forum in St Petersburg.

IMPACT ON GLOBAL SEA-LEVEL RISE

At last year’s Arctic Council meetings, I presented on the topic of sea-level rise. One of the ways a warming Arctic could directly impact the rest of the world is by raising global sea levels. Arctic regions store vast amounts of water on land as frozen ice sheets and glaciers.

The Greenland ice sheet holds enough frozen water to raise sea-level 6m! Run-off from this vast ice sheet – currently the biggest single source of meltwater adding to the volume of the world’s oceans – is 50 per cent higher than in pre-industrial levels and increasing exponentially as a result of global warming. About 625 million people live in

low-elevation coastal zones. These zones, more than 70 per cent in South-east Asia, are vulnerable to sea-level rise. It also threatens Singapore’s coastal population, economic activity, infrastructure and ecosystems because 30 per cent of its surface area is less than 5m above sea level.

Combating climate change is an urgent common challenge for the international community and requires immediate global action. I am proud to be part of Singapore’s endeavours to generate commitments and take actions to maintain the sustainability of the Arctic.

• Professor Benjamin Horton is the chair of the Asian School of the Environment at Nanyang Technological University and a principal investigator at the Earth Observatory of Singapore. He is an author of the Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report and is an editor of the new Sixth Assessment Report.



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Staying the path to a globalised world

These are not happy times for Asia. China, the key driver of Asian and world growth, has just reported its weakest expansion in recent memory. Elections in India and Indonesia guarantee that political expediency will trump prudent economic policy. Developed Asian nations are not doing much better: South Korea, faced with an anaemic economy, has been tempted to fuel anti-Japan sentiment as a diversion. If only things were better beyond the region. They aren't.

This week, the European Central Bank said that what was thought to be a temporary slowdown in the euro zone was likely to be more prolonged because of global trade tensions. The US economy, after an extended period of expansion, is poised

for slowdown. All signals point to a disorderly Brexit, with untold consequences. Meanwhile, voters everywhere are showing a worrying receptivity to anti-globalisation rhetoric. Mr Fang Xing-hai, vice-chairman of China's securities regulator, was not wrong when he told the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos that countries need to reform. It was thus wholly appropriate that this year's annual WEF meeting had Globalisation 4.0 as its theme. As Singapore Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat laid out, multilateralism and free trade are key for future common prosperity.

Recent Davos meetings have tended to feel the dominant presence of one world figure whose words and positions define the big questions of

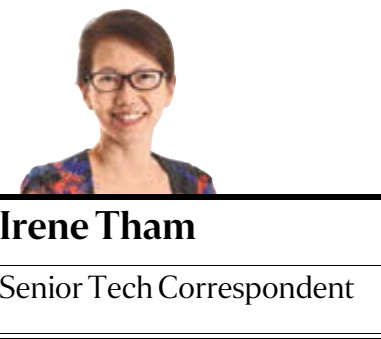
the time. Two years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping had that privilege with his robust defence of free trade. This year, the man of the hour was Mr Shinzo Abe, soon poised to be Japan's longest-serving post-war leader. Citing hope as the most important factor for growth, he called for this year's G-20 meeting in Osaka to lay the ground to regain optimism for the future. Osaka, he said, should be the watershed moment towards worldwide data governance – essential for making free flowing, secure and trusted data a "gap buster". A second call he made was for disruptive innovations in the pursuit of solutions to check climate change, underlined by CCU – carbon capture and utilisation.

His words carry credibility, not just because of

the vigour he has brought to Japan these past six years he has been in office, but also because of his commitment to a globalised world and a rules-based, transparent, international order. He has midwived the 11-nation Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership – the rump deal that followed President Donald Trump's disappointing decision to pull the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Mr Abe is also weeks away from implementing the EU-Japan Economic Partnership. The world, especially leaders who skipped attending Davos, should listen to him carefully. Like him, the clear message from many at the WEF was about the need for a renewed commitment to multilateral collaboration.

Is streaming of pirated content illegal?

Are Android media boxes going to be banned? What will the new Copyright Act to be tabled this year portend for sellers of media devices and consumers?



Android media set-top boxes are found everywhere – in Sim Lim Square and in electronics chains like Harvey Norman and Best Denki – and they sell for as little as \$200 apiece. The media boxes stream content from different online sources including Netflix, Hulu and YouTube, and project it onto a regular TV screen.

Questions over the legality of these boxes have surfaced over the past two years when two retailers – Synnex Trading and An-Nahl – were dragged to court in January last year for allegedly infringing copyright by helping people access pirated content via the Android boxes they sell.

It was a surprising and an unprecedented move against piracy, with their accusers being pay-TV operators Singtel and StarHub, and entertainment titans Fox Networks Group and the Premier League.

The outcome of the cases – which would have been a landmark decision to determine the legality of Android boxes pre-loaded with apps pointing to pirated content – is still pending a public hearing.

But last Tuesday, the Ministry of Law (MinLaw) and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (Ipos) threw a curve ball by announcing a decision to ban the sale of these boxes with "add-on" services that help consumers to access pirated content.

The amendments to Singapore's Copyright Act will be tabled in Parliament some time this year.

The move raises three questions. Are all Android boxes illegal? Is streaming of pirated content illegal? What does this mean for the consumer?

ARE ALL ANDROID BOXES ILLEGAL?

At its core, Android boxes – so called because they use the Google-based operating system Android – are similar to any computer or mobile phone. They often come pre-loaded with legitimate apps to stream content from different sources including Netflix, Hulu and YouTube. Many also come pre-loaded with apps that offer access to pirated content online.

But most consumers are none the wiser when it comes to telling one app from another in these boxes.

There is no simple guideline to figure out what is a legitimate app and what is not. For example, you may think that free means pirated – how else can any app bypass payment for premium sports channels and subscription TV services? However, free can also mean legit – such as YouTube videos, for example.

This is why MinLaw places the burden of checking on suppliers – importers, distributors and retailers.

By themselves, the Android boxes are perfectly legal. They are as legal as a computer, smart phone or a smart TV is. However, boxes that are designed to give consumers access to pirated content will be made illegal under the MinLaw rules.

Rather than go after consumers, the authorities will go after the sellers of these boxes.

MinLaw narrowly defines copyright infringement as follows: "To incur liability, the retailer should have some degree of knowledge that the device in question can, and very likely will, be used to access content from a source that is not authorised by the rights-holder."

This means that the Android box must be specifically designed or loaded with illicit apps to access content from illegal sources, or advertised as such. Also, the retailer will be liable if it has provided some form of assistance – such as supplying website links or subscription services to pirated content – to enable consumers to access pirated content. So sellers



are liable only if they help consumers access pirated content.

In its Copyright Review Report issued on Jan 17, the result of three years of consulting the industry, MinLaw noted: "We are also mindful that any new provisions should not be overly broad that they catch retailers of simply any device that allows the user to access audio-visual content on the Internet from a source that is not authorised by the rights-holder."

For example, any computer or smartphone can potentially be used to access illegal content. The legislation is not meant to cover retailers of such devices. The ministry also noted that retailers should not be made responsible for how purchasers set up and use such devices.

In fact, given how fast the technology is developing, MinLaw

Legal experts said that the amended law will not likely criminalise the streaming of illegal content by consumers as it would be "an extremely unpopular move" and "draconian" to cover what consumers do in the privacy of their own homes. Similarly, very few copyright holders go after end-users for accessing pirated content, fearing a public backlash against such a move.

should go beyond its focus on "devices" to include large electronic items like smart TVs – TV sets with built-in capabilities to access the Internet directly – in its amended Copyright Act.

People with smart TVs don't even need to buy any Android box as they can access pirated content directly on their TV screens via the installed apps. Most TV sets on sale at consumer electronics chains Best Denki, Courts and Harvey Norman are now smart TVs.

The amended law will thus make it an offence to sell devices that help consumers access pirated content. But will it be lawful to buy such a device or own one? MinLaw's report doesn't address this specifically, although its focus on making the retailer responsible suggests buying or owning one would probably not be considered illegal.

WILL IT BE AN OFFENCE TO STREAM PIRATED CONTENT?

The other question on consumers' minds: under the revised law, will it be an offence to stream pirated content?

Existing provisions in the Copyright Act are too narrow in their scope and do not look at streaming adequately. One existing provision states that those found guilty of "circumventing encryption measures" by using illegal set-top boxes can face a fine of up to \$20,000. Copyright holders such as Singtel and StarHub can take individuals to court for these offences.

Streaming falls outside the scope of this provision. This is because the consumer is not the one

circumventing encryption measures. The broadcaster of illegal content, and those who distribute the apps to access such content, are the ones applying circumvention techniques to open up encrypted signals meant for paying customers so that others who do not pay for the content get to view the content too.

"While the broadcaster of the illegal stream may be liable under the Act, the recipient of the illegal stream – in the absence of any decoding or encryption circumvention – is unlikely to be liable," said Mr Cyril Chua of Robinson LLC.

Streaming also falls outside the scope of another existing piece of legislation, which states that those found guilty of possessing illegal content can face a fine of up to \$50,000 or be jailed for up to three years, or both. Streaming is probably not considered possessing illegal content, as content is not downloaded on the computers of those viewing it.

The soon-to-be amended Copyright Act, which will follow the decisions published in the Copyright Review Report, will likely not address the question of whether consumers can be faulted for streaming pirated content.

While not ideal, the gap in the law may be deliberate. Legal experts said that the amended law will not likely criminalise the streaming of illegal content by consumers as it would be "an extremely unpopular move" and "draconian" to cover what consumers do in the privacy of their own homes.

Similarly, very few copyright holders go after end-users for

accessing pirated content, fearing a public backlash against such a move. For instance, local anime distributor Odex's director Stephen Sing was flamed online and threatened soon after the firm targeted downloaders in 2007. Anti-Odex online campaigns followed.

Experts said the cost of policing is also a major consideration for lawmakers. Specifically, streaming can be done on so many devices – set-top boxes, mobile phones, computers and smart TVs – and many users do so legally.

Checking the devices of consumers for pirated content is not only draconian, but also extremely taxing on the nation's limited resources. The same could be said for banning access to illicit apps or illicit websites, and the related enforcement actions by the local authorities.

"It is overly expensive and time-consuming for any government to do that. The law has to be drafted such that taxpayers' money is not spent on policing for copyright holders," said Mr Aloysius Cheang, Asia-Pacific executive vice-president of the Centre for Strategic Cyberspace + International Studies, a London-based think-tank.

If the law does not clear up issues such as whether it is legal to stream pirated content or own Android boxes that allow access to such content – and is hard to enforce to boot – why have it?

Here, some context is helpful. As a country seeking to be a hub for patents and intellectual property, Singapore must have a legal regime that reflects those aspirations. MinLaw's approach of taking a practical stance on these issues follows feedback from copyright holders, pay-TV operators and trade bodies like the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia (Casbaa) and Asia Video Industry Association (Avia).

According to a Casbaa-commissioned study on piracy in Singapore, 40 per cent of some 1,000 Singapore residents aged 18 to 64 polled online in 2017 are actively tuning in to pirated content. Many do so via Android boxes that stream online content to their TV sets.

So the law has to be updated to target such devices, as copyright holders have found it difficult to resort to laws created in the DVD era to argue their case.

Singapore's position dovetails with what has been taking place in Hong Kong. Its courts have convicted illicit Android box sellers for peddling the ware.

So far, no country is known to have criminalised the streaming of pirated content by consumers.

Like many other jurisdictions, MinLaw wants to adopt a balanced approach. While targeting those who peddle devices for pirated content, it also wants consumers to access content affordably. As its statement said: "The lack of access to legitimate content at reasonable prices is a major reason why users would turn to such set-top boxes."

The more prices for legitimate content come down, the less the demand will be for devices enabling such illicit access. In the long run, the whole issue of Android boxes and illegal streaming may be moot. In the meantime, those peddling such devices should know that hard times are coming.

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Field notes

Tourists at the site where a rare golden earring, believed to be more than 2,000 years old, was discovered by Israeli archaeologists in Jerusalem. The city had a 38 per cent surge in tourists last year, the largest increase for any city worldwide that year.
PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Tourists, not terrorists, in Jerusalem

The tourism boom in the City of David is unexpected as experts had feared the opposite when US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and relocated the US Embassy from Tel Aviv



JERUSALEM • A group of tourists from South Korea warmed themselves in the mild winter sun – they were about to enter the City of David abutting the Temple Mount and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site of Islam.

It is one of the most important archaeological sites in Jerusalem and the excavations here, in the mostly Palestinian quarter of Silwan in Jerusalem, go back to the times of the legendary biblical king, some claim. The dig is attracting huge crowds these days.

The South Korean tourists, who visited shortly before Christmas last year, patiently waited for their tickets, while a class of Israeli school children and several Americans lined up in front of the box offices.

The rush on the City of David is representative of a boom in tourism in the city. There was a 38 per cent surge in tourists last year, the largest increase for any city worldwide that year.

This is surprising as only slightly more than a year ago, experts had feared the exact opposite.

When United States President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 and relocated the US Embassy from Tel Aviv, many feared an outbreak of violence.

The Islamic world was outraged and staged emergency summits that threatened consequences. Palestinian politicians warned of a new uprising. The radical Hamas called for terror attacks. But it is tourists, not terrorists, who have populated the streets of Jerusalem.

AN ISRAELI STRATEGY
Meanwhile, Israeli opposition activists and European states

feared that Israel would go on a building spree for Jewish settlers all over East Jerusalem, the part of the city claimed by the Palestinians as their capital in a two-state solution.

Organisations such as Peace Now, which documents the activities of Israeli settlers, however, told The Straits Times that there was no significant increase in the houses constructed or seized by settlers in East Jerusalem in the past year.

Mrs Sohara Abbassi, deputy director of a Palestinian community centre in the contested district of Silwan, declared: "Mr Trump's decision has actually changed nothing in our everyday lives."

But Mr Jonathan Misrahi, head of non-governmental organisation Emek Shaveh, which examines the political significance of archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, argued that everyone is overlooking crucial developments and that tourists have unknowingly become part of an Israeli strategy in the struggle for the Holy City.

Near the City of David, a seven-storey-deep excavation site lay behind a construction fence advertising a Segway tour around Jerusalem. Several archaeology students enjoyed a breather before descending to sift the ground.

From a professional point of view, Mr Misrahi, an archaeologist himself, is enthused by their finds. "They discovered foundations of a house from the Hellenistic period in the third century BC, Roman buildings," he said.

But as a peace activist, he is concerned that the fence around the site encroaches on adjacent Palestinian homes. Only a few steps separate their inhabitants from the walls reaching dozens of metres into the ground.

"The archaeological park here, the excavations, the opening of more and more tourist attractions – all this is part of a comprehensive plan of the Israeli government, the Shalem Plan," he explained.

Under this plan, the Holy Basin, an area of about 2 sq km containing the most important religious sites in the old city and its surroundings, is to be linked to the predominantly Jewish western part of the city



through tunnels, excavations and tourist infrastructure projects.

"This is supposed to prevent any future division of the city and give this part of Jerusalem an exclusively Jewish narrative," said Mr Misrahi.

So while no construction spree has ensued overground, Israel has begun to implement its Shalem Plan feverishly below the surface.

Archaeologists and engineers are digging daily under Jerusalem's Old City and City of David, to connect Jewish neighbourhoods with key locations in predominantly Arab-populated areas. This has supposedly created a tunnel system rivaling the plots of any Dan Brown novel.

The excavations in strategically important Silwan, which the Israelis call Kfar Schiloach, have been allocated the equivalent of €11 million (\$\$16.9 million) over the next two years. By comparison, so far, the budget of the antiquities authority for activities across the whole country was only about €50 million a year.

Mrs Abbassi said 40 Palestinian homes had been damaged by the excavations, seven so severe that their occupants had to move out. But Mr Misrahi said it had never been possible to prove in court that the damage in the old buildings was caused by excavations.

At the same time, the Israeli government strives to create a new



PART OF GOV'T'S PLAN

The archaeological park here, the excavations, the opening of more and more tourist attractions – all this is part of a comprehensive plan of the Israeli government, the Shalem Plan.

MR JONATHAN MISRAHI, head of non-governmental organisation Emek Shaveh, which examines the political significance of excavations in Jerusalem.

Above: Tourists at David's Tomb in the City of David.
Left: Archaeologist Jonathan Misrahi argues tourists have unknowingly become part of an Israeli strategy.
ST PHOTOS: GIL YARON

reserve's main purpose is to prevent the Palestinian residents of Silwan from building new houses and increase their numbers.

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD
Mr Misrahi said Mr Trump's decision had removed Israel's fear of American punitive measures that impeded many projects. "The government can now redouble its efforts in Jerusalem," he said.

This also had repercussions at the diplomatic level. To be sure, the tsunami of new embassies hoped for by Israel never came to Jerusalem. Only Guatemala has recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital so far. Australia declared only West Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel and does not want to relocate its embassy before a peace treaty with the Palestinians is signed.

However, Palestinian columnist Sam Bahour told ST: "The recognition of all of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was politically significant. It was a blow to the current Palestinian leadership under President Mahmoud Abbas."

Israeli political scientist Dan Schuftan told ST that he believes Mr Trump's decision "has removed the Palestinians as a factor from the Middle Eastern equation. They can do nothing against Mr Trump and have become completely irrelevant".

Which makes it more surprising that the Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem have not risen up in protest.

"The Jerusalem people are exhausted," Mr Bahour contended. The relocation of the embassy has changed nothing in everyday life. "But if there is no dramatic change on the ground, there is no reason to demonstrate," he believed.

Mr Misrahi has his own explanation. "Tourism is a double-edged sword for the Palestinians. Yes, it cements Israel's rule, but Palestinians also benefit from every visitor who creates jobs here," he said.

Mrs Abbassi said Jerusalem will forever remain as Palestine's capital. "Our resistance is that we simply continue to exist and stay here," she said, defiantly at first.

But at the end of this interview, she sounded resigned.

"Unfortunately, it is also a fact that the Israelis now control everything. Mr Trump has only pronounced a fact no one can refute," she lamented.

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Time to curb excesses of surveillance capitalism

Shoshana Zuboff

A decade ago, privacy scholars Chris Hoofnagle and Jennifer King found that people's interest in protecting their privacy increased in proportion to their understanding of how companies acquire and use their personal data. As long as people were kept in the dark, companies could count on little resistance. That helps to explain how the plundering of personal data has exploded during the past 20 years. Tech companies learnt how to turn your life into data without asking. That our ignorance is their bliss is among the unique signatures of a new economic logic that I call surveillance capitalism. Capitalism has always evolved by claiming things that exist outside the market and bringing them into the market for sale and purchase. This is how we turned making a living into "labour" and nature into "real estate". Surveillance capitalism now claims private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural predictions that are bought and sold in a new kind of private marketplace. And it takes place almost completely without our knowledge. Competition among surveillance capitalists has produced startling innovations that challenge the

foundations of a democratic society. This unprecedented economic logic was invented almost by accident during the financial emergency of the dot.com bust, when the founders of Google discovered that the "data exhaust" clogging their servers could be combined with powerful analytic capabilities to produce reliable predictions of user behaviour. Originally, the key behaviour of interest was whether a user might click on an online ad. The young company's ability to turn these surplus data into reliable click-through predictions became the basis for a lucrative sales process known as ad targeting. With targeting, advertisers could buy Google predictions on what we would do now, soon and later. The idea was first deployed in 2001 in the strictest secrecy. Only when Google went public in 2004 did the world hear about it – and learn that, partly on the strength of these operations, Google's revenue had increased by 3,590 per cent. Surveillance capitalism soon spread to Facebook and other Silicon Valley companies. But it is no longer the exclusive domain of the tech sector. It has now invaded every economic domain – insurance, entertainment, finance, retail, health, real estate, cars: anywhere a product or service begins with the word "smart" or "personalised". The reality is that we are shifting

into a new surveillance-based economic order in which our private experience becomes the free raw material for markets that trade in predictions of our actions. Surveillance capitalists soon discovered that they could use these data not only to know our behaviour but also to shape it. This became an economic imperative. It was no longer enough to automate information flows about us; the goal became to automate us. As one data scientist explained it to me: "We can engineer the context around a particular behaviour and force change that way... We are learning how to write the music, and then we let the music make them dance." It works like this: Ads press teenagers on Friday nights to buy pimple cream, triggered by predictive analyses that show their social anxieties peaking as the weekend approaches. Pokemon Go players are herded to nearby bars, fast-food joints and shops that pay to play in its prediction markets, where "footfall" is the real-life equivalent of online clicks. This digitally informed behaviour modification is carefully designed to bypass our awareness. It robs us of autonomy, of the freedom to choose our actions and of the right to say "no", eroding democracy from within. And it's a one-way mirror: These firms know everything about us, while their operations are

unknowable to us. Their predictions are about us but not for us. Apple chief executive Tim Cook made this point recently while calling for a more comprehensive approach to privacy legislation: "Right now, all of these secondary markets for your information exist in a shadow economy that's largely unchecked – out of sight of consumers, regulators and lawmakers." Democracy has slept while surveillance capitalism has flourished. Elected officials determined to rein in the digital titans must understand that surveillance capitalism is bigger than any single company. Regulation will require a new framework that strengthens our understanding of privacy rights. We will need to interrupt and, in some cases, outlaw (1) the unilateral claim to private human experience as a free source of raw material and its translation into data; (2) the exclusive concentrations of knowledge illegitimately gleaned from our behaviour; (3) the manufacture of computational prediction products based on the secret capture of our experience; and (4) the sale of behavioural prediction products. Western democracy has successfully confronted many excesses of unchecked capitalism, outlawing child labour, uninspected food and unfair wages. Today it faces a similar challenge in curbing the excesses of a rogue surveillance capitalism. It is not the work of a day or a year, but it is necessary work, and we must be up to the task, because the alternative promises dangerous consequences for human freedom and democracy. WASHINGTON POST.

• Shoshana Zuboff, a professor emerita of Harvard Business School, is the author of *The Age Of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight For A Human Future At The New Frontier Of Power*.

Why Big Brother doesn't bother China

Adam Minter

Who says government cannot innovate? In one Chinese city, the local court system recently launched a smartphone-based map that displays the location and identity of anyone within 500m who has landed on a government creditworthiness blacklist. Worried the person seated next to you at Starbucks might not have paid a court-approved fine? The Deadbeat Map, as it is known, provides pinpoint confirmation, the ability to share that information via social media and – if so inclined – a reporting function to notify the authorities. It is chilling, and yet likely to be quite popular. People in China have already embraced a whole range of private and government systems that gather, aggregate and distribute records of digital and offline behaviour. Depicted outside of China as a creepy digital panopticon, this network of so-called social-credit systems is seen within China as a means to generate something the country sorely lacks: trust. For that, perpetual surveillance and the loss of privacy are a small price to pay. As in many developing countries, the fact is that China's economic growth has outpaced its ability to create and police institutions that promote trust between citizens and businesses. For example, a decade after Chinese milk producers were revealed to be adulterating infant formula, Chinese parents still shun the country's dairy industry and distrust of food producers remains almost universal. Meanwhile, China remains the counterfeiting capital of the world. Some of its most recognisable companies – including Alibaba, Tencent and Pinduoduo – are known as thriving markets for fakes, thereby hurting the credibility of Chinese e-commerce. Trust between individuals is not much healthier. Scams and frauds – including dating scams – targeting individuals and families are daily fodder on Chinese news programmes. This contributes to a general mood of suspiciousness. The Chinese government has long viewed these issues as more than social problems. Building a "consumption-based" economy, as China has long aspired to do, requires consumers with access to credit. So, in 2014, the government launched a roadmap for establishing a "social-credit system" with mechanisms for "rewarding trustworthiness and punishing untrustworthiness". In its most basic form, that might mean a company chooses to get into the credit-reporting business and starts collecting individual consumer financial data. The government's interests are far broader. For example, the National Travel Bureau collects information on "uncivilised" travellers, publicises it and uses it to keep those travellers off planes and trains. Today there are more than 40 social-credit systems operating across China. Some are private: Sesame Credit, a subsidiary of Alibaba, collects and aggregates data generated on Alibaba services, such as a customer's payment history and record of time and money spent online, then devises a score used to extend credit and other benefits. Others are run by the government, such as a national list of individuals who have defaulted on court judgments. Those on it are restricted from a range of activities, from staying at luxury hotels to enrolling their children in expensive schools. (Now they might also find themselves on the Deadbeat Map.) Rather than generating outrage, these digital debtor prisons have proven extremely popular. A 2018 survey of more than 2,200 Chinese citizens found that 80 per cent had joined a commercial social-credit system (Sesame Credit, which requires users to opt-in, was the most popular service), although only 7 per cent were aware they'd been included within a government system. More surprisingly, 80 per cent of respondents either somewhat or strongly approved of social-credit systems, with the strongest support coming from older, educated and more affluent urbanites – a demographic generally associated with more "liberal" values such as the sanctity of privacy. On social media, at least, China revels in seeing individuals land on social credit-related blacklists. In 2016, when the National Tourism Administration published the names of people banned from plane travel, the news generated thousands of "likes" and repostings on the Sina Weibo social media site. It is possible that many citizens have not thought through the implications of having their lives recorded in such minute detail. At the same time, a whopping 76 per cent of survey participants said that "mutual mistrust between citizens" is a problem in Chinese society. Social-credit systems are viewed as a means of bridging that trust gap. Indeed, support for such systems corresponds closely to those who perceive they have received some benefit from them – whether it be a loan, the ability to rent a car or share a bicycle without having to place a deposit, or the chance to evaluate the creditworthiness of someone met on a dating app. In these cases, quality-of-life improvements are viewed as being worth the erosion of privacy. Of course, that is not going to be the case for everyone. It is difficult to imagine that there is any good use for the Deadbeat Map, beyond public shaming and cruel entertainment. Likewise, if and when the Chinese government manages to consolidate its various systems into an overarching technology that rates individuals against a host of criteria – including, perhaps dissident political opinions – and punishes them for malfeasance, China's citizens might very well turn on the idea. Nobody, not even someone conditioned to an authoritarian government, wants their life dictated by a score or rating. BLOOMBERG

Supporters of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido at a town hall in Caraballeda, Venezuela, earlier this month. Mr Guaido was recognised by the US and several other countries as the legitimate president of Venezuela on Wednesday, even as President Nicolas Maduro held on to power. PHOTO: EPA-EFE



Call US move on Venezuela what it is – regime change

Noah Feldman

The United States and about a dozen other countries recognised opposition leader Juan Guaido as the legitimate president of Venezuela on Wednesday, even as President Nicolas Maduro maintained his grip on the office. Under ordinary principles of constitutional and international law, can one country simply declare that someone who manifestly isn't the president of the country actually is, and act accordingly? Well, no. Not really. Mr Maduro is a terrible president who has not only broken the Venezuelan economy but also repeatedly broken the Venezuelan Constitution himself. His re-election in 2018 by a reported 67.8 per cent was not free or fair. It is defensible as a matter of foreign policy for the US to seek his ouster. But the constitutional argument that Mr Maduro is not really president is nothing more than a fig leaf for regime change. Even as fig leaves go, it's particularly wispy and minimal. The US policy is, in practice, to seek regime change in Venezuela. It would be better to say so directly. It may seem convenient now for

the US to hide its objective behind a constitutional argument. In the long run, however, it is far from clear that President Donald Trump's administration should be embracing a legal argument that invites foreign countries to rely on doubtful interpretations of the local Constitution and declare that they know who the president genuinely is. That kind of argument can be flipped against governments the US wants to support – or even the US itself. The policy argument in the US should be about the genuinely important question of whether the US should pursue regime change in a Latin American country. That debate should not be obscured by the implausible, technical suggestion that the US is actually just recognising the legitimate government there. The official State Department declaration of recognition for Mr Guaido cites Article 233 of the Venezuelan charter, one of the world's longest. Beyond that, it doesn't give much legal justification. In fact, Venezuela's Constitution does not allow for impeachment by the National Assembly, of which Mr Guaido is the leader. Instead, it specifies that the president can be recalled by popular vote. Article 233

doesn't say that the assembly can remove the president. It just says the National Assembly president can fill the office of the presidency for 30 days if the president "shall become permanently unavailable to serve". It lists the bases for permanent unavailability, which include removal from office by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, physical or mental disability, or abandonment of office. None of those conditions has been met. In an op-ed article in the Washington Post, Mr Guaido offered the brief argument that "there's no legitimately elected president", presumably because Mr Maduro's election was tainted. But nothing in the Constitution says that that decision is up to Mr Guaido or the National Assembly. So if the constitutional argument for Mr Guaido being the legitimate president is so weak, what about the authority of foreign countries like the US to recognise him? It's an established principle of international law that governments have the right to recognise each other. Suppose there was a genuine civil war within a country, and a dispute about which government was a legitimate one. It would be up to each foreign state to make its own determination. So there's no power that can tell the US or the other countries that recognised Mr Guaido that they must reverse themselves. What's more, in the US, recognition is treated as a political act. The executive branch is given near-total deference to decide what governments it wishes to recognise. So the Trump administration's

decision can't easily be second-guessed by Congress. Most of the time, however, the US makes some effort to justify its recognition decisions. That's where the fig leaf of Article 233 comes in – and where its inadequacy matters. Imagine that the US wants to support a government under threat, like, for example, the government of Ukraine when Russian President Vladimir Putin was invading Crimea. When that happens, the US insists vociferously that its ally is a sovereign state and that no other government can de-recognise it. When the US plays fast and loose with recognition, it undercuts its moral authority in such situations. In the extreme case, you can imagine US opponents announcing that Mr Trump isn't president, because they think he's guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours – even though he has not been impeached by the House and removed by the Senate. Those are, after all, just procedures – like the procedures of the Venezuelan Constitution that the American declaration flouts. To be sure, declaring that Mr Trump wasn't the president would put a country at odds with the US. Americans would consider it an effort at regime change. That's exactly what the US is doing in Venezuela. Everyone in Venezuela knows it, whether they support Mr Maduro or Mr Guaido. In this case, we would all be better off with the truth. BLOOMBERG

• Noah Feldman is a professor of law at Harvard University.



Filipino and Vietnamese protesters displaying anti-China placards and Vietnamese national flags during a rally calling on China to respect their rights in the disputed South China Sea, in front of the Chinese consular office in Manila in August 2016. For Vietnam and China, the fight over fishing rights provides a volatile subtext to their often tense relations, says the writer, with visceral anti-Chinese sentiment running deep in a country that won a border war against its larger neighbour in 1979. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

‘Silent fishing war’ in the South China Sea

Faced with diminishing stocks, Vietnam’s fishermen find themselves on the front line of Beijing’s ambitions

John Reed

HANOI • When boat QNG 90675 limped into the Vietnamese port at Quang Ngai on Dec 12, it showed the signs of a confrontation at sea with a Chinese coast guard ship. According to local officials, the coast guard boarded the boat, forced the crew of seven to stand with their hands behind their heads, and confiscated their catch and fishing gear, before cutting the boat’s nets and casting them into the sea.

The boat had been fishing in the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, as Vietnamese fishermen have for centuries, inside what Hanoi claims as the country’s exclusive economic zone in what it calls the East Sea. With coastal areas of Vietnam overfished, the fishing grounds around the islands abound in species such as tuna and flying fish.

But the Paracels also lie inside China’s self-declared maritime boundary – the “nine-dash line” – the swathe of the sea within which Beijing claims exclusive rights. It does not hesitate to demonstrate this against Vietnam’s fishermen.

The manager of the fleet that includes QNG 90675 says the Chinese vessel accosted the boat and officers jumped on board, saying they were fishing in Chinese waters. “The area where we fish is Vietnamese water,” says Mr Duong Van Rin, who manages 20 boats. “We aren’t violating any country’s waters.”

‘ALIEN VESSELS’

Vietnamese industry officials and fishermen say confrontations between Chinese coast guard or civilian boats – referred to by state media in Hanoi as “alien vessels” – and Vietnamese craft are frequent, and have in several cases seen boats sunk, fishermen injured and equipment or catches stolen.

The fights over fishing represent a little-reported economic and environmental facet of the clash between China and its South-east Asian neighbours in one of the world’s hottest geopolitical trouble spots, as well as a potential source of a broader US-China conflict.

Fishermen, as academic Gregory B. Poling of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) wrote in a recent research paper, “serve on the front lines of this contest” as they fight for their livelihoods against bigger, better-equipped Chinese coast

guard and fishing boats.

Beijing has been dredging reefs and building bases and artificial islands to demonstrate its military dominance in the area and, in effect, vetoed oil and gas development in the sea by Vietnam, including two projects with Spain’s Repsol – and its other neighbours.

At the same time, Chinese, Vietnamese and other fishing fleets are competing over diminishing fish stocks, whose depletion analysts blame in part on China’s dredging and construction in the sea. Vietnamese fishermen, as they compete with the better-equipped vessels of China’s coast guard and fishing fleet, risk getting involved in incidents that could spark bigger conflicts.

“As they race to pull the last fish from the South China Sea, (fishermen) stand at least as much chance of triggering a violent clash as do the region’s armed forces,” Mr Poling wrote.

The CSIS study, which used satellite imagery and other technology to track fishing boats, revealed that overall activity is increasing year on year, and concluded that a part of the Chinese fleet was engaged in what it called “paramilitary” work rather than commercial fishing.

STEEL V WOOD HULLS

Vietnam says the clashes threaten a core resource on which at least 1.4 million of its 96 million population depend for their livelihoods. The South China Sea accounted for about 12 per cent of the world’s fishing stocks, according to one 2015 estimate. But Vietnam’s wooden fishing boats, working the country’s more than 3,200km of coastline, are little match for China’s steel-hulled fleet – an apt metaphor for Beijing’s rising might in relation to its militarily and economically weaker neighbours.

“In remote waters, especially in areas near the Paracels and Spratlys, Vietnamese fishing boats are often obstructed, harassed and threatened by Chinese ships,” says Mr Pham Anh Tuan, vice-president of the Vietnam Fisheries Society (Vinafish), in an e-mail reply to questions. “Vietnamese fishermen fish for their livelihood and to affirm the sovereignty of Vietnam.”

The country is already increasing its military spending, especially on its navy, in tandem with its fast-growing economy and in response to perceived threats, including from China.

When asked about the clashes, the Chinese government says its coast guard carries out “normal patrolling duties in the relevant waters under China’s jurisdiction”, and that in “individual cases” it sometimes takes action against foreign fishing ships.

“Everyone understands that it is quite normal to have some fishery disputes from time to time between neighbouring coastal countries,” a Chinese government spokesman says. He advises the Financial



A sinking Vietnamese boat (far left), which was rammed and sunk by Chinese vessels near the disputed Paracel Islands, is seen near a Marine Guard ship at Ly Son island of Vietnam’s central Quang Ngai province in May 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

Times to “focus more on the sound fishery cooperation between China and Vietnam”, including mutual aid the two countries provide each other in emergencies, rather than what he calls “sporadic fishery disputes”.

Tensions between China and its neighbours about fishing are not limited to Vietnam. Boats from the Philippines have also reported being harassed by Chinese coast guard vessels, including ramming and firing of water cannon and warning shots.

According to Dr Jay Batongbacal, a South China Sea specialist at the University of the Philippines College of Law, fishermen at Scarborough Shoal, a disputed reef, “had to endure the Chinese coast guard taking part of their catch” until the practice was filmed by a local TV crew last year.

Manila won a 2016 United Nations tribunal case against China over its claims on the South China Sea. But since Mr Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine President, took power, he has sought closer economic and political ties with Beijing.

Three years ago, the Indonesian navy captured Chinese boats in the Natuna Sea, inside what it claims as its maritime economic zone. Beijing’s Foreign Ministry justified their presence by calling the waters China’s “traditional fishing grounds” – a view disputed by Jakarta.

ANTI-CHINA PROTESTS

For Vietnam and China the fight over fishing rights represents something bigger. It provides a volatile subtext to their often tense relations, with visceral anti-Chinese sentiment running deep in a country that won a border war against its larger neighbour in 1979.

Vietnam’s communist leadership has a strong relationship with Beijing, a leading trading partner, even as it builds closer ties with the United States, Russia and other countries. Yet Hanoi is also one of the most strident voices in

HARASSED AT SEA

In remote waters, especially in areas near the Paracels and Spratlys, Vietnamese fishing boats are often obstructed, harassed and threatened by Chinese ships. Vietnamese fishermen fish for their livelihood and to affirm the sovereignty of Vietnam.



Vietnam Fisheries Society Vice-President Pham Anh Tuan, on clashes at sea between Chinese coast guard or civilian boats and Vietnamese craft.

South-east Asia that speaks out against China’s unilateral actions in the sea.

Hanoi does, however, choose its words carefully, in part due to the widespread Sinophobia in the country. Anti-China protests have broken out several times in recent years, catching Hanoi off guard and representing an unpredictable element for a government that is in most respects firmly in control.

Vietnam’s Foreign Ministry voiced concern over the clashes at sea, saying in a statement on Wednesday that it had “legal grounds and historical evidence” for its claims of sovereignty over the Paracels and Spratlys.

“Vietnam is strongly opposed to heavy-handed measures and harsh treatment by other countries against Vietnamese fishermen, such as the chasing and ramming of

fishing vessels and the confiscation of fishing equipment, with a view to, inter alia, advancing their illegal maritime claims in the East Sea,” the ministry said, without referring directly to China.

It added that “Vietnam has lodged its diplomatic protests, requesting relevant countries to take appropriate actions and make adequate compensation”.

The clashes at sea have become so serious that Vietnamese state-controlled media – which often censor politically sensitive content – reported on at least two incidents last year, in August and October, cases where fishing boats were rammed and either sunk or badly damaged by “alien ships”.

“It’s very difficult for fishermen and their families, for whom a fishing boat is their only way of making money,” says Associate Professor Nguyen Chu Hoi at Hanoi’s Vietnam National University.

According to Vinafish, the country’s fishing industry employs 432,000 directly and one million more in processing, boat building and related industries, bringing in exports of US\$1.7 billion (S\$2.3 billion) a year and contributing nearly 3 per cent to Vietnam’s gross domestic product.

Prof Hoi describes the dispute as a “silent fishing war”.

Among the worst affected are the communities in the central city of Danang and beyond it to the south, he adds, and the provinces facing the Paracels and Spratlys “are the most vulnerable of all”.

Among them is Quang Ngai, where the clash involving QNG 90675 took place. Far from Vietnam’s industrial hubs around Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the province has 30,000 fishermen and is dependent on the industry.

At the local fishing association, a banner in red and yellow, the colours of the Vietnamese flag, reads “The silver sea belongs to the

people” – a quote from the country’s revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh.

Inside, however, Mr Phan Huy Hoang tells a different story. Mr Hoang, the association’s head, estimates that Chinese boats ram Vietnamese ones or confiscate their equipment “about 30 times a year”. He says most of the clashes involve surveillance or coast guard vessels, and result in the sinking of Vietnamese boats five or six times a year. “When they crash into wooden boats, it’s not safe,” Mr Hoang says. “All the Chinese boats are steel-hulled.”

Since 1999, China has used its coast guard and fleet to impose a summer fishing ban in the South China Sea. It says it does so to protect stocks and, in recent years, has reduced the number and size of its own boats that fish in the area. But Vietnamese fishing groups see it as a violation of their economic rights and have protested and, in some cases, tried to defy it.

TROUBLE WITH THE EU

Worryingly for Hanoi, the fight with China over offshore fishing grounds is beginning to indirectly impact its trading relations with the European Union, with which it recently signed a free trade agreement.

According to analysts and officials, the clashes with China are driving more Vietnamese boats into the fishing grounds of the Indian Ocean and South Pacific – in some cases thousands of kilometres from their own territorial waters – and directly into confrontation with the EU, which uses its clout as a leading importer of seafood to enforce sustainable fishing practices.

The European Commission last year handed the country a “yellow card” warning for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. If Brussels were to upgrade it to a “red card”, when the decision is reviewed this year, more than US\$1 billion of Vietnamese seafood exports to the bloc would be at risk.

“Vietnamese fishermen are under tremendous pressure from the lack of resource, and have to go to foreign areas to fish,” Prof Hoi says. “But because of the yellow card, they can’t.”

In a bid to avoid punitive EU measures, Vietnam last year passed a law to bring its fishing industry up to international environmental standards. Officials say they have stepped up monitoring of boats, issuing fines for infractions.

Hanoi is also helping fishermen upgrade their boats to make them more secure. “The government wants to help fishermen to stick to their traditional fishing grounds in the Paracels,” says Mr Rin, the ship owner. “They also want fishermen to be safe, not just from the weather but from Chinese boats as well.”

FINANCIAL TIMES

• Additional reporting by Nguyen Khac Giang in Hanoi and Lucy Hornby and Archie Zhang in Beijing

BIG PICTURE



WEATHER

Windy, with passing showers in the afternoon.
High 33 deg C **Low** 24 deg C
24-hr PSI as of 5pm yesterday: 52 to 58 (Moderate)



PHOTO: XINHUA

Hot race out in the cold

No water, no problem.

These paddlers still managed to “row” their boats across this large tract of ice in Duolun county, in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. They were competing in the National 14th Winter Games Ice

Dragon Boat meet held yesterday.

Just like dragon boat races that take place on water, rowers are accompanied by traditional Chinese drumming as they race to the finishing line, reported The Huffing-ton Post.

The bottom of the boats are fitted with ice skates, and rowers use poles with spikes at the tip to propel their boats forward.

More than 30 teams from all over China took part in the competition, reported Xinhua.

ST+ news with benefits

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One of the most thrilling movies will open here on Feb 21, and readers of The Straits Times will have a chance to watch it before it opens.

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Direct subscribers can stand a chance to watch Liam Neeson in Cold Pursuit at a preview screening on Feb 18, 7pm. PHOTO: STUDIOCANAL S.A.S



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The spa offers treatments such as massages, facial treatments and body scrubs. One key treatment is Chinese Meridian Therapy, which focuses on specific meridian points to relieve aches and stress. PHOTO: G.SPA

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Dec factory output lower than forecast

Preliminary EDB data in line with trend in region; four out of six clusters contract

Seow Bei Yi
Business Correspondent

Singapore's manufacturing output came in lower than expected last month despite a boost from pharmaceuticals, growing 2.7 per cent compared with the same period in 2017.

Economists in a Bloomberg poll had predicted 4 per cent year-on-year growth and analysts expect a more muted outlook ahead.

Preliminary data, released yesterday by the Economic Development Board (EDB), appears in line with weaker numbers reported in the region, Maybank Kim Eng economist Lee Ju Ye told The Straits Times. Taiwan's manufacturing contracted last month and South Korea saw growth of close to zero.

Purchasing Managers' Indexes – a key indicator of economic activity – have fallen in Asia, Europe and the US as well, she said.

In Singapore, according to EDB preliminary figures, four out of six clusters contracted last month.

"It supports the story that manufacturing is affected as the tech cycle weakens and the US-China trade war seems to be disrupting some supply chains," Ms Lee said. "Manufacturing in Singapore may contract for a few months in early 2019, partly because of front-loading of orders in late 2018. The downturn could worsen in mid-2019 if there is no US-China trade deal in March."

Other factors that could pose a drag include a weaker semiconductor sector, she added, noting that December numbers were the weakest in three years for the sector.

Singapore's smaller rise in manufacturing output last month came despite a boost from biomedical, with production up 29.9 per cent.

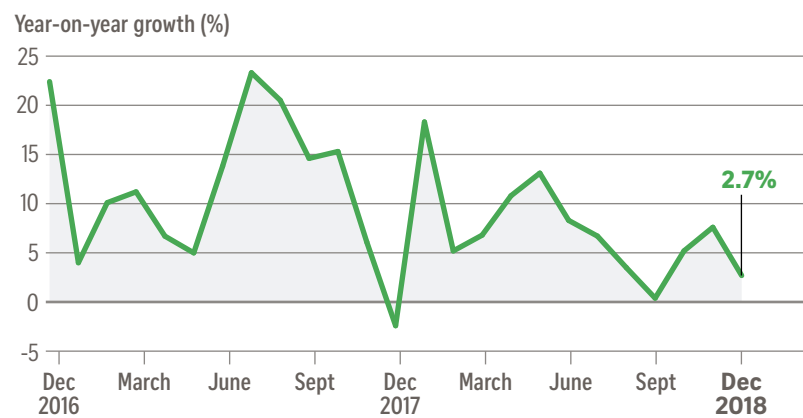
This was the fastest growth since August 2017, when it rose 30.5 per cent year on year, said UOB economist Barnabas Gan.

Excluding biomedical manufacturing, overall factory output fell 1.8 per cent. On a seasonally adjusted month-on-month basis, manufacturing output decreased 5.6 per



Overall industrial output for last year rose 7.2 per cent from the year before – a marked slowdown from 2017's 10.4 per cent, according to EDB's preliminary figures. ST FILE PHOTO

Manufacturing output



Source: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

DOWNTURN COULD WORSEN

Manufacturing in Singapore may contract for a few months in early 2019, partly because of front-loading of orders in late 2018. The downturn could worsen in mid-2019 if there is no US-China trade deal in March.

“

MAYBANK KIM ENG ECONOMIST LEE JU YE, on the outlook for Singapore's manufacturing output.

cent after two months of increases.

Overall industrial output for last year, however, rose 7.2 per cent from the year before – a marked slowdown from 2017's 10.4 per cent.

Biomedicals were supported by strong pharmaceuticals output, with higher production of active pharmaceutical ingredients and biological products. Another contributor was medical technology.

The only other cluster with an increase was transport engineering, where output grew 23.7 per cent.

Key contributors to the rise were the marine, offshore engineering and aerospace segments. But it is unclear if strength in the marine and offshore space can be sustained, said Ms Lee, since oil prices have fallen from their peaks and this may mean delays in some projects.

Four other clusters saw drops, including in electronics, where output fell 6.8 per cent last month.

Most electronics segments contracted, except for infocomm and consumer products as well as the other modules and components.

Precision engineering output fell as well by 8.7 per cent, with declines in machinery and systems segments, and that of precision modules and components.

The contractions in these two clusters coincided with the latest December non-oil domestic export figures, which saw exports of electronics products falling 11.2 per cent, said UOB's Mr Gan.

The chemicals cluster saw a fall of 1.4 per cent, with the other chemicals segments and petrochemicals slipping. General manufacturing output dropped 5.7 per cent as well, largely due to the printing segment, as well as the food, beverages and tobacco segment.

Overall, all clusters saw an increase in output for last year, compared with 2017.

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NTUC calls for more internships at Temasek-linked firms

Aim is to help young people in their job search amid uncertain business climate

TAKING DIFFERENT TRACK

After graduation, we know that skills will get degraded quite quickly. After you get your first diploma and you come out, can we also get you to get a second diploma so that you can change track depending on how the market changes.

”

NTUC ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL DESMOND CHOO, urging the Government to provide more subsidies for courses, so that young people can take a second diploma or degree in order to be more agile in the job market.

Joanna Seow
Manpower Correspondent

The labour movement wants Temasek-linked companies to offer more internships so that young people can get a leg-up in their job search amid the uncertain business environment.

National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) assistant secretary-general Desmond Choo made the call yesterday when he urged the Government to open up more internship places, especially in firms in Singapore investment company Temasek's portfolio.

Temasek has stakes in such companies as Singapore Airlines, Standard Chartered Bank and Singtel.

The move could help young people

who, on graduation, are taking longer to land jobs that they want, said Mr Choo, who is executive secretary of NTUC's youth wing.

He was speaking to reporters about NTUC's Budget wish list for youth and young parents, after attending a one-day career event for young people at shopping mall Bugis+.

This year's Budget statement will be unveiled in Parliament on Feb 18 by Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat.

Another item on the wish list is for more subsidies to be given for courses, so that young people can take a second diploma or degree in order to be more agile in the job market, added Mr Choo, who is also Mayor of the North East District.

"After graduation, we know that skills will get degraded quite quickly. After you get your first diploma and you come out, can we also get you to get a second diploma so that you can change track de-



Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu (left) and Ms Denise Phua, Mayor of Central Singapore District, at one of the booths at the Todo Todo Skills Marketplace fair yesterday. Todo Todo is a career support initiative started by NTUC and the People's Association two years ago. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

pending on how the market changes," he said.

Repeating his call at last year's Budget debate, Mr Choo suggested making it mandatory for companies to offer family care leave to workers, to help the "sandwiched" group of people with young children and elderly parents.

He also noted that there are many single young Singaporeans taking care of their parents, and they could also do with more support, he said.

Finally, there is scope for the Government to ease the burden of infant care and childcare costs, he added.

Overall, these moves would represent a commitment to understand-

ing the needs of younger Singaporeans and "translating that into policies to help them develop and dedicate themselves to their job as well as take care of the family", he said.

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu, who addressed the Todo Todo Skills Marketplace fair, reiterated that the Government is "very serious" about helping young people who, she said, should be strikers, playing to win, not just playing to avoid losing.

"We're not just here to get the next job; some of you here hopefully will also be creating the next job for us," she added.

Todo Todo is a career support initiative started by NTUC and the People's Association two years ago.

Since then, 10,000 young people have used 56 of its programmes.

Yesterday's event for the Central Singapore district was attended by about 380 young people.

Among them was Mr Thiang Soon Jie, 22, a final-year economics and finance student at RMIT University. He was paired with a Huawei Technologies' senior director last year under a Todo Todo mentorship programme.

Said Mr Thiang: "I wanted to work in technology consulting, but my mentor... advised me to first understand data analytics before working on turning data into actionable insights for companies."

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Fewer crane incidents but there's room for improvement: Zaqy

Sue-Ann Tan

There are fewer safety incidents involving cranes but more can be done to improve the safety of such operations, said Minister of State for Manpower and National Development Zaqy Mohamad.

The number of such dangerous occurrences has fallen from 22 in 2015 to 12 last year, he told more than 400 participants yesterday at the eighth edition of the Workplace Safety and Health Symposium on Cranes at the HDB Hub.

"We should not be complacent, but be further motivated to make crane operations even safer for our workers. One way we can do so is through technology," he said.

For example, some landscaping companies here use mechanised cranes with claws and saws to cut tree branches. Workers no longer need to stand in an elevated man-basket to operate the crane but can do so using a joystick on the ground.

Mr Zaqy said the introduction of data loggers in mobile cranes since 2015 has helped to boost safety, with the number of dangerous occurrences involving mobile cranes dropping from 11 in 2015 to three last year. For these three cases, the data loggers installed enabled investigators to access critical information such as weight of load at the time.

The Ministry of Manpower is working with industry stakeholders to test a second-generation of data loggers, which will have real-time video monitoring and recording features. In the event of a safety breach, instant alerts will be sent to stakeholders.

The ministry is also testing drones for crane visual inspections and looking into using 3D mapping



Minister of State Zaqy Mohamad (centre) trying out Salestrade Corporation's radio control system, which lets an operator control a crane remotely. With him are (from left) Mr Ismadi Mohd (in dark blue shirt), director, OSH Specialist Department, Occupational Safety & Health, Manpower Ministry; Mr Mohamed Abdul Akbar, chairman, WSH Council National Crane Safety Taskforce; Mr Raymond Wee, Salestrade's managing director; and Mr John Ng, chairman, WSH Council. PHOTO: WSH COUNCIL

for accident investigation.

Crane-related dangerous occurrences, as classified by the Workplace Safety and Health Act, include the collapse or failure of a crane, derrick, winch, hoist, piling frame or other appliances used in raising or

lowering persons or goods, or the overturning of a crane.

Firms are also using technology to improve safety and efficiency.

Mr Senguttuvan Nagarajan, head of environmental, health and safety at construction firm Dragages Singa-

pore, said the company uses self-balancing lifting frames for the modules in Prefabricated Prefinished Volumetric Construction (PPVC).

PPVC is a building method where large modules complete with finishes are manufactured in factories

and assembled on-site.

"Usually, the weight is not evenly distributed because of the different units, but this new technology with the self-balancing feature has helped us to have no safety issues and gives our employees more con-

12

Number of safety incidents involving cranes last year, down from 22 in 2015.

fidence," Mr Nagarajan said.

Engineering firm ZLX Engineering has produced anti-collision technology where an alarm beeps when a crane gets close to another crane. When two cranes are too close, the system will be locked to prevent the operator from moving the crane.

Meanwhile, industrial solutions provider Salestrade Corporation provides companies with remote controls so the cranes can be operated by someone outside the cabin. This omits the dangers of working from height, as the operator can work from the ground or another building.

However, it is not just about technology but also the adoption of such tools by companies, said Singapore Cranes Association manager Alson Ang. His association represents over 60 companies and industry business associates.

He said: "It is about convincing companies to take it on. The challenge is the cost, lack of knowledge of how to use the technology on the ground and the many choices that are available. They need to have a clear picture so they can prioritise what they need step by step and have benchmarks on how they can improve their operations."

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From brutal year to stellar start, regional tech stocks lifting sector

Regional technology shares are staging a comeback and leading the rest of the sector higher.

After a brutal 21 per cent sell-off in the MSCI AC Asia Pacific Information Technology Index last year – the worst performance in a decade – semiconductor-related companies are clawing back gains. That may come as a surprise after the latest round of disappointing results, but investors are looking ahead at a second-half recovery.

"It's that momentum – a lot of investors are thinking we are nearing a bottom," said Mr Marcus Shin, an analyst with Mizuho Securities in Tokyo. "Those who think a sector rebound is due in the second half are already making a move. There's no burden valuation-wise."

South Korea's SK Hynix, which posted its first operating profit decline in more than two years, said it would be nimble with investment

spending. It sweetened its underwhelming results with a 50 per cent increase in dividend payouts, but Mr Shin noted its guidance on first-quarter results was "pretty bad" and a "shock".

Samsung Electronics, the world's largest memory-chip maker, is expected to report downbeat fourth-quarter results on Jan 31, after some analysts described its preliminary estimates as a "shocking" miss.

The MSCI gauge for technology stocks in Asia is up 7.8 per cent this year, clawing back US\$77.6 billion (\$105 billion) in market value. Top contributors to the rebound are Samsung, Hynix, Japan's Hitachi and Tokyo Electron.

China's Internet giants have also been in recovery: Tencent Holding is up more than 8 per cent this year, while Alibaba Group Holdings' American depository receipts have risen 14 per cent.



"The rally in the segment is lifting Hong Kong tech stocks too," said Mr Kevin Chen, an analyst with China Merchants Securities HK. "While there's no clear signal of a recovery in the smartphone supply chain, AAC and Sunny stocks have dropped a lot earlier and investors who believe it's not going to get worse may have started short covering."

Elsewhere, investors have also shrugged off dim earnings reports and forecasts. ASML Holding's first-quarter sales forecast missed estimates due to a fire at a supplier, while Texas Instruments and Lam

Research announced sales forecasts that trailed estimates. Shares of all three companies climbed.

To be sure, doubts remain whether the current rally is sustainable. Mr Shin forecast a 30 to 40 per cent drop in prices of dynamic random-access memory chips used in servers this quarter, compared with the previous quarter.

"We have yet to see all the bad news, so it's hard to think that this rally will just keep on going," he said. "But I do expect a dramatic recovery both in terms of earnings and share prices in the second half." BLOOMBERG

Children trying out Samsung Electronics' Galaxy S9 at its store in Seoul earlier this month. Samsung is expected to report downbeat fourth-quarter results on Jan 31. PHOTO: REUTERS

85-year-old man loses \$100m in gold trading scam

HONG KONG • An 85-year-old man has become Hong Kong's biggest victim of a bullion trading scam after being conned out of HK\$580 million (\$100 million) over two years, according to the South China Morning Post.

The man was one of seven investors who lost a total of nearly HK\$620 million in the scam, which involved trading gold on the London commodities market, the newspaper reported yesterday, citing unidentified people.

Hong Kong police confirmed the arrest of 14 people related to the deception in an e-mail statement to Bloomberg News, while they declined to comment on the specifics about the elderly victim.

According to the Hong Kong police website, fraudsters usually lure victims into fake precious metal transactions through cold calls. They would then ask victims to deposit money into an investment account and sign documents authorising a third party to trade on their behalf. Victims eventually find themselves losing all their capital as a result of hefty commission fees and investment losses.

That is what happened to the 85-year-old man. He received his first cold call in mid-2016 and made many transactions over two years, the newspaper said.

Other victims in the scam were ethnic Chinese from Taiwan, the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, according to the report. BLOOMBERG

Shipping rates slump in sign of global slowdown

Demand for raw materials, finished goods hit over last 6 months amid US-China trade spat

Freight rates for dry-bulk and container ships, carriers of most of the world's raw materials and finished goods, have plunged over the last six months in the latest sign the global economy is slowing significantly.

The Baltic Dry Index, a measure of ship transport costs for materials like iron ore and coal, has fallen by 47 per cent since the middle of last year, when a trade dispute between the United States and China resulted in the world's two biggest economies slapping import tariffs on each other's goods.

Dry-bulk commodities are taken as a leading economic indicator, because they are used in core industrial sectors like steelmaking and power generation, and analysts say the recent declines in activity point to a serious economic slowdown.

"Signs that the US and China remain well apart in trade talks continued to weigh on sentiment in commodity markets," ANZ bank said in a note yesterday.

This was after US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said on Thursday that the US and China were "miles and miles" from resolving issues.

"The global economy and dry-bulk shipping market are showing us very real signs of distress," said Mr Jeffrey Landsberg, managing director of commodity consultancy Commodore Research.

"While dry-bulk rates often face at least some pressure during the early stages of a year, the magnitude of the declines being seen lately has been very rare," he added.

The Baltic index has lost a quarter of its value since the start of the year, and dry-bulk is not the only shipping market under pressure.

The Harpex Shipping Index, which tracks container rates, has dropped by 30 per cent since June last year. As a measure of the demand for shipping manufactured goods from producers to consumers, container rates are also seen as a leading economic indica-



The Harpex Shipping Index, which tracks container rates, has dropped by 30 per cent since June last year. The slump underscores weakening manufacturing data from Asia, Europe and North America. PHOTO: REUTERS

tor. Their slump underscores weakening manufacturing data from Asia, Europe and North America.

"Slowing global economic growth,

the unresolved US-China trade conflict, the US government shutdown and Brexit drama are all sources of uncertainty dragging at sentiment,"

said chief market strategist Hussein Sayed at futures brokerage FXTM.

In the euro zone, a survey published on Thursday showed that

SOURCES OF UNCERTAINTY

Slowing global economic growth, the unresolved US-China trade conflict, the US government shutdown and Brexit drama are all sources of uncertainty dragging at sentiment.



MR HUSSEIN SAYED, chief market strategist at futures brokerage FXTM.

business growth nearly stalled at the start of the year as trade tensions and political woes meant incoming new work fell for the first time in over four years.

Asian industrial powerhouse Japan posted similarly weak manufacturing data in its own survey this week. In China, the National Development and Reform Commission this week warned that the downward pressure on the economy would impact its job market as falling factory orders point to a drop in activity in the coming months.

The US has so far been in a better shape than other leading economies, but even there, manufacturing indices have been reflecting weakness since late last year. REUTERS

No-deal Brexit would cost Ford up to \$1.3b

DETROIT • Ford Motor said on Thursday it faces a bill of up to US\$1 billion (\$S1.3 billion) if Britain leaves the European Union without a deal, comprising World Trade Organisation (WTO) tariffs and the impact of a weaker pound.

The impact of Brexit on Ford would be in the range of US\$500 million to US\$1 billion depending on a variety of factors, Ford said in a statement.

Carmakers and other manufacturers, including Airbus earlier on Thursday, have warned about the toll a no-deal Brexit could impose, including higher tariffs, disruption to supply chains and threats to jobs.

Britain is due to leave the EU in 62 days. With Prime Minister Theresa May failing to win support for her negotiated deal, companies are increasingly worried about the possibility of a chaotic Brexit.

Ford chief financial officer Bob Shanks on Wednesday declined to say what the financial impact of a no-deal exit could be, but said Ford was already planning for it. "We clearly have already started to work on the eventuality of there being a hard Brexit," he told reporters.

"We're actually incurring costs, doing things now to prepare for that, so there will be an impact. It's a material impact," he added.

Last week, Mr Shanks said a no-deal exit was unlikely, but if it occurred it would be "catastrophic".

Ford estimated last March that a hard Brexit, which would see WTO tariffs of 10 per cent on imports and exports and lower levels on components, would cost it up to US\$1 billion a year.

Ford, the top-selling automotive brand in Britain, operates two engine plants in the country, its third-largest market and the destination for roughly one in three cars made at its German Cologne plant.

On Jan 10, Ford, which employs 53,000 people in Europe, said it would cut thousands of jobs and look at plant closures in Europe as part of its plan to return to profit in the region. The automaker employs about 13,000 people in Britain.

REUTERS

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Dow Jones



BullsAndBears

Regional bourses end higher on Wall St gains

Markets shrug off US official's comment on China trade deal being 'miles and miles' away

Leila Lai

Regional markets shrugged off news that the United States and China are “miles and miles” away from reaching a trade deal, to close mostly higher yesterday on the back of gains on Wall Street.

The effect here lifted the Straits Times Index 11.52 points, or 0.36 per cent, to 3,202.25, but it still dipped 0.69 per cent over the week.

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has tried to moderate expectations for the Jan 30-31 trade talks, telling CNBC: “There’s been a lot of anticipatory work done, but we’re miles and miles from getting a resolution and that shouldn’t be too surprising.”

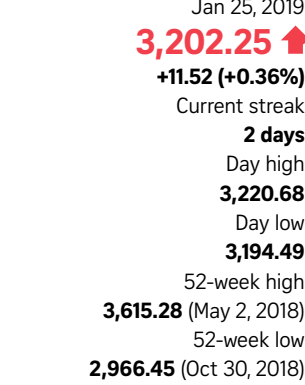
He added that while both parties are keen to make a deal, people should not expect the meeting to solve all issues.

About 1.63 billion shares worth \$1.05 billion changed hands, with gainers outpacing losers 229 to 160.

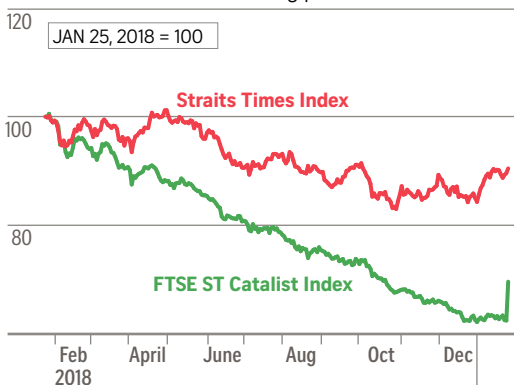
Oil- and gas-linked counters Rex International Holding and Ezion Holdings led active trading as oil prices rose for a third day on supply fears over the Venezuelan crisis.

Rex International rose 2.53 per cent to 8.1 cents on volume of 58 million, while Ezion Holdings ended 1.96 per cent ahead at 5.2 cents with 45.8 million shares traded.

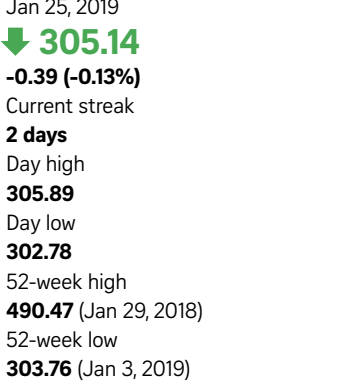
Straits Times Index



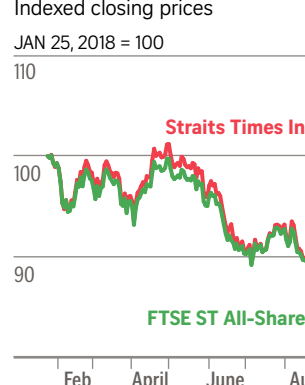
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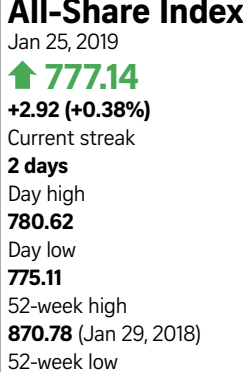
FTSE ST Catalyst Index



Indexed closing prices



FTSE ST All-Share Index



Taxi giant ComfortDelGro gained 4.02 per cent to \$2.33. About 12.4 million shares changed hands after news that the Land Transport Authority may regulate ride-hailing operators more closely.

figures for last month disappointed yesterday, growing 2.7 per cent compared with 7.6 per cent in November. Economists had expected 4 per cent year-on-year growth.

The UOB Global Economics and Markets Research team noted that

if fourth-quarter gross domestic product manufacturing growth retreats in tandem with industrial production, overall GDP for the last three months of 2018 will likely come in at 2 per cent, bringing full-year expansion to 3.2 per cent.

With the March 1 deadline for a US-China trade deal looming, investors may take heart that China is working to boost its economy even as the American government shutdown creates headwinds for its own economy.

China’s Finance Ministry has guided for increased spending, large-scale tax cuts and reductions in social security fees, with details to be finalised in March.

“The overlapping timeline with US-China trade negotiations will probably offer some downside buffer, should investors become disappointed by the substance of the latter,” the UOB team said on Thursday.

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Goldman, Morgan Stanley seek to void trades after \$56b flash crash

Goldman Sachs Group and Morgan Stanley asked some counterparties to cancel or amend trades in Singapore-listed Jardine Matheson Holdings, after a US\$41 billion (\$56 billion) flash crash on Thursday saw shares change hands far below market level, according to people familiar with the matter.

Some of the amendment requests were to settle the trades at a higher price, according to the people, who asked not to be named. Goldman and Morgan Stanley declined to comment on what triggered the brief plunge.

Speculation has been swirling about Jardine’s dramatic start to Thursday’s session, when some 167,500 shares changed hands at US\$10.99, compared with the previous day’s close of US\$66.47, then bounced back within minutes.

That implies a loss of about US\$9 million for those who sold at the pre-market level, and an instant windfall for those on the other side of the trade, according to calculations.

The Singapore Exchange decided not to cancel the trades after reviewing the incident, as sellers had “ample time” to withdraw their orders if they did not want to offload shares at the low price.

The exchange attributed the decline to sell orders that overwhelmed bids during the pre-open, for which neither a “fat finger” error nor a malfunctioning computer system was responsible. BLOOMBERG

Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED/SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	271	+3	13800	5.9	1.3
194	161	CapitaCom Trust	190 cd	+5	30190	4.6	1
388	298	Capitaland	330	+1	6431	3.6	0.7
238	195	CapitaMall Trust	236 cd	+4	12823	4.9	1.2
1359	780	CityDev	906	+3	1394	2	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	233	+9	12366	4.5	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2422	+2	2708	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US948	unch	616	2.2	-
139	85.5	Genting Sing	106	unch	20211	3.3	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	27	unch	21898	3	0.7
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	+0.5	2910	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US707	+8	1722	2.8	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6601	-81	358	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3784	+11	71	0.8	0.4
4097	2766	Jardine C&C	3726	+41	390	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	620 cd	+7	4976	4.8	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1147	+6	6204	3.2	1.2
569	455	SATS	485	-3	1019	3.7	3.4
830	672	SGX	757 cd	+7	3053	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	972	-2	1133	4.1	0.8
292	231	SPH	252	unch	2017	5.2	1.1
371	319	ST Engineering	368	+1	3251	4.1	5.4
260	243	Sembcorp Ind	264	unch	3112	1.9	0.7
363	283	Singtel	405	-1	12231	6.7	1.7
94	57.5	ThaiBev	74 cd	+2	17780	0.9	3.6
3037	2380	UOB	2588	-2	1798	3.9	1.2
930	591	UOL	666	+3	1594	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1581	+45	1496	3.8	2
332	297	Wilmar Intl	328	+2	7356	3	1
164	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	135	-1	13798	3.3	1

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED/SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	271	+3	13800	5.9	1.3
127	105	Ascott Reit	116	+1	5903	6.1	1
77	59	Bumitama Agri	71.5	unch	355	1	1.7
185	143	CDL HTrust	157	+2	3889	-	1.1
194	161	CapitaCom Trust	190 cd	+5	30190	4.6	1
388	298	Capitaland	330	+1	6431	3.6	0.7
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3128	2265	DBS Grp	2422	+2	2708	5.9	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US948	unch	616	2.2	-
78	59	Far East HTrust	62.5	unch	1903	-	0.7
197	150	First Resources	174	+3	1799	3.9	2.3
236	211	Fraser's Cpt Tr	229 cd	+2	1606	7.1	0.9
116	101	Fraser's L&I Tr	106	-2	8543	6.5	1.2
139	85.5	Genting Sing	106	unch	20211	3.3	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	27	unch	21898	3	0.7
230	167	GuocoLand Ltd	186	-2	129	3.8	0.5
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	+0.5	2910	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US707	+8	1722	2.8	0.3
6974	1099	JMH USD	US6601	-81	358	2.4	0.7
4080	3155	JSH USD	US3784	+11	71	0.8	0.4
4097	2766	Jardine C&C	3726	+41	390	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	620 cd	+7	4976	4.8	1
130	108	Keppel Reit	118 cd	+1	19738	4.7	0.8
215	151	ML	206	+1	1351	5.5	3.9
273	170	Man Oriental USD	US193	-1	136	1.6	1.4
178	152	Mapletree Com Tr	177 cd	unch	8183	5.1	1.2
213	184	Mapletree Ind Tr	203 cd	+3	5923	5.8	1.4
140	118	Mapletree Log Tr	139 cd	+2	21419	5.5	1.2
128	107	Mapletree NAC Tr	123	+2	5542	6.1	0.9
843.5	73	NetLink NBN Tr	77.5	-0.5	3096	-	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1147	+6	6204	3.2	1.2
215	136	OUE	147	+1	46	2	0.3
92.5	64.5	OUE HTrust	69	-0.5	1342	-	0.9
250	157	Olam Intl	182	+2	279	4.1	0.9
59.6	28	Oxley	29	unch	2050	5.2	0.8
306	256	ParkwayLife Reit	274	-1	1669	4.9	1.6
121	98	Raffles Medical	112	unch	642	2	2.6
456	358	SATS	485	-3	1019	3.7	3.4
830	672	SGX	757 cd	+7	3053	4	9.5
1184	914	SIA	972	-2	1133	4.1	0.8
337	220	SIA Engineering	253	unch	163	5.1	1.9
292	231	SPH	252	unch	2017	5.2	1.1
106	98	SPHREIT	102	unch	2204	5.4	1.1
371	319	ST Engineering	368	+1	3251	4.1	5.4
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	264	unch	3112	1.9	0.7
281	149	Sembcorp Marine	163	-1	3041	1.2	1.5
58	39	Silverlake Axis	41	+0.5	1881	7.3	6
147	88.5	SingPost	97	-0.5	1825	3.6	1.3
363	283	Singtel	305	-1	12231	6.7	1.7
298	158	StarHub	182	unch	1670	8.8	5.6
78	63.5	StarhillGbl Reit	71.5	-1	1241	6.4	0.8
217	163	Suntec Reit	203	+2	647	3.9	0.9
94	57.5	ThaiBev	74 cd	+2	17780	0.9	3.6
10.2	3.7	Thomson Medical	7.5	+0.1	12525	-	2.7
3037	2380	UOB	2588	-2	1798	3.9	1.2
930	591	UOL	666	+3	1594	2.6	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1581	+45	1496	3.8	2
332	297	Wilmar Intl	328	+2	7356	3	1
243	183	Wing Tai	203	+2	647	3.9	0.5
164	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	135	-1	13798	3.3	1
190	116	Yanlord Land	130	+2	1983	5.2	0.5

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	138	+1	121	7.5	1
70	48	Accordia Golf Tr	54.5	+1	319	7.1	0.6
90.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	83	+0.5	791	-	0.8
119	99	Ascendas-iTrust	110	+2	7230	5.5	1.3
58.5	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	13	+0.2	5937	50	0.2
64.5	48	Banyan Tree	59	+0.5	302	17	0.8
281	115	Best World	268	unch	1133	15	9.6
85.5	76	Boustead	79.5	-0.5	74	3.8	1.2
126	79.5	BreadTalk	89	unch	95	79	2.4
657	521	Bukit Sembawang	564	-3	7	3.2	1.1
88	65.5	Cache Log Trust	75cd	+1	1534	9.7	1.1
54	39.5	Centurion	41	+0.5	320	6.1	0.7
167	104	China Aviation	115	+1	444	3.9	1
47.5	29.5	China Everbright	35.5	+0.5	189	1.4	0.7
165	90.5	China Suncine	127	-1	558	2.4	1.4
104	64	Chip Eng Seng	69.5	+0.5	839	5.8	0.6
53.5	31.5	Cosco	35.5	+0.5	2574	-	1.5
700	302	Delong	599	-	-	-	0.6
28	17.5	Duty Free Intl	20cd	+0.1	371	9.3	1.3
79	67.5	EC World Reit	72	+0.5	47	8.4	0.8
59.5	47	ESR-REIT	51.5xd	-1.5	4621	7.5	1.1
142	92	First Reit	104	+2	2216	8.3	1
151	134	Fraser's Com Tr	143 xd	-3	2094	6.7	0.9
82	66.5	Fraser's HTrust	71.5	-0.5	1298	-	0.9
27.5	16.4	Geo Energy Res	19.7	-0.2	1455	5.1	1.2
91	70.5	HRnetGroup	79.5	+1	76	2.9	2.4
68	52	Health Mgt Intl	55	+0.5	19	0.6	5.3
279	73	Hi-P Intl	91	+1	3452	27.5	1.4
283	252	Hong Leong Fin	263	-1	32	49	0.6
82.5	71	IREIT Global	74	+0.5	59	8	1
41.5	18.3	Indofood Agri	22	+1.5	1756	-	0.3
81.5	43	Japfa	81	+0.5	1341	0.6	1.5
82	49	KSH	52	-0.5	35	4.2	0.9
86.9	53	Keppel-KBS Reit USD	68cd	unch	1234	9.1	0.6
148	128	Keppel DC Reit	148cd	unch	4346	4.9	1.4
188	132	Keppel T&T	187	+1	328	-	1.2
119	7	KrisEnergy	8.5	unch	10501	-	1
79	44.5	Lian Beng	49.5	+0.5	8	4.5	0.4
42.5	18	Lippo Malls Tr	22	+1	6899	15.6	0.8
53	30	MM2 Asia	33	-1	1350	-	1.8
98.5	69.5	ManulifeReit USD	84	unch	1204	6.6	0.7
120	95	Metro	99.5	+0.5	172	5	0.6
28.5	5	Noble	8.1	susp	-	-	-
66.9	45	QUE Com Reit	49	unch	926	9.5	0.6
68	54	PEC	58.5	+0.5	1	3.4	0.6
46	17	POSH	18.4	-0.1	20	-	0.5
64.5	44.5	Q&M Dental	49.5	-	-	3.3	3.5
117	55.5	QAF Ltd	69.5	-3	557	7.2	0.8
124	96	Riverstone	111	-2	68	21	3.6
55	22	SIIC Environment	31	+1.5	526	-	0.5
45	38	Sabana Reit	41.5cd	+0.5	1524	7.7	0.7
119	90	Sheng Siong	111	-1	503	3	6.1
25.5	6.6	Sino Grandness	7	-0.2	1513	-	0.1
69	56	Soilbuild&Biz Reit	62cd	+0.5	1157	8.5	0.5
129	80.5	TianjinZX USD	84.5	-0.5	231	-	0.7
50	32.5	Tuan Sing	39	+1	173	15	0.5
136	54	UMS	62.5	+0.5	2851	8	1.5
112	58.5	Valuetronics	69.5	+1	1349	6.6	159.9
16.8	8.3	Ying Li Intl	12.3	+0.2	6454	-	0.3
52.5	24	Yoma Strategic	34.5	-0.5	3376	0.7	0.5
37.5	16.1	Yongnam	17.5	unch	315	-	0.3

Olam plans to sell four segments to unlock \$2.2b

Rubber, sugar, wood products, fertiliser businesses will go; firm ramping up growth in new sectors

Agri-business giant Olam International plans to sell off four business segments in the next six years to unlock around US\$1.6 billion (\$\$2.2 billion), it said yesterday before markets opened.

Its rubber, sugar, wood products and fertiliser businesses have all been put on the chopping block, alongside some assets and operations from the surviving segments, as they were deemed not to be aligned with Olam's new priorities.

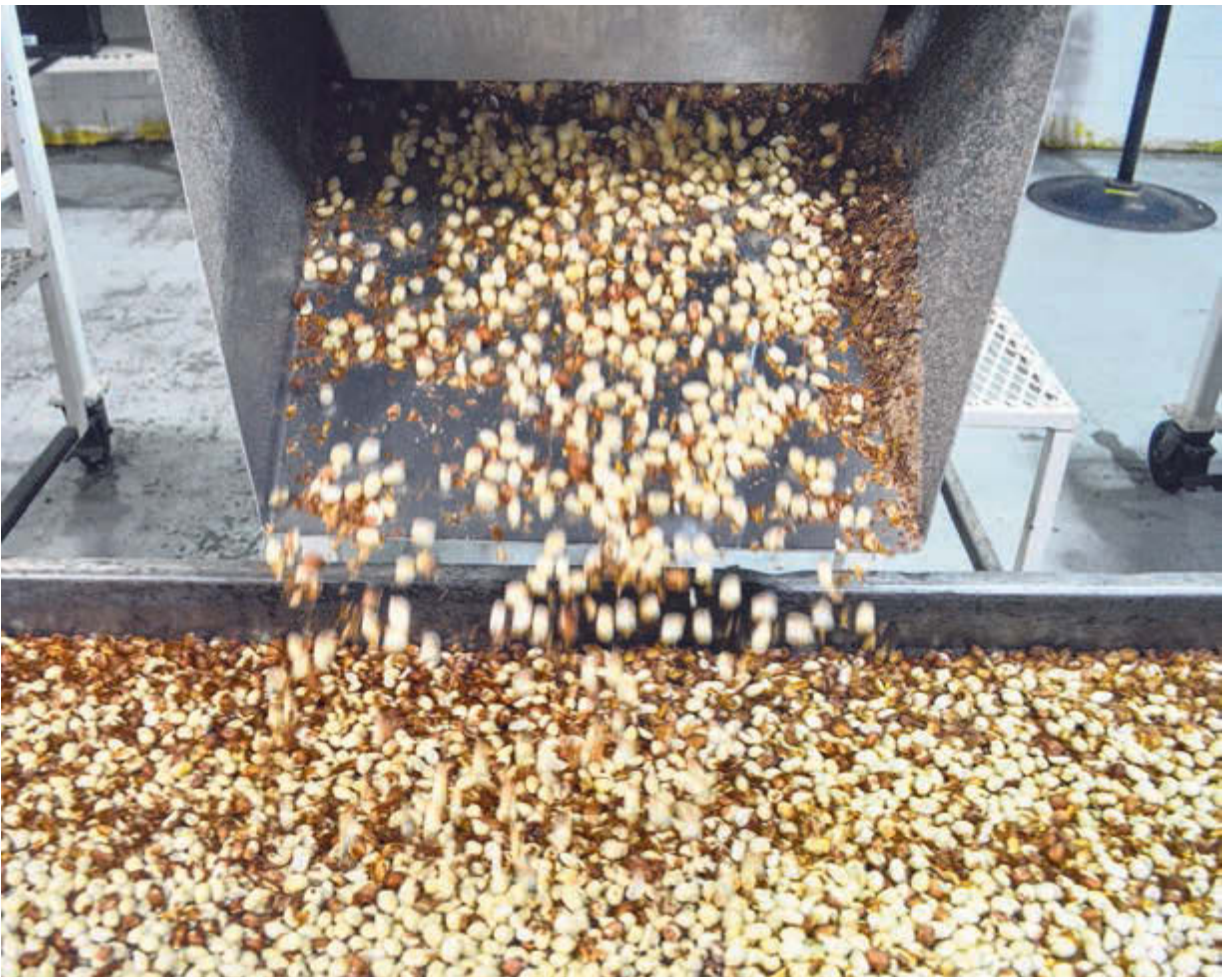
At the same time it will invest US\$3.5 billion in 12 segments deemed attractive or proven, such as dairy, nuts, grains and animal feed.

The firm will step up its growth in new segments such as e-commerce for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as co-manufacturing brands with customers to meet demand.

Chairman Lim Ah Doo said the Olam board has thrown its weight behind the plan and is also picking financial advisers "to explore various options to maximise value for shareholders".

He did not detail what these options might be, but the exercise, set to begin in mid-March, will wrap up by the fourth quarter of this year.

Olam co-founder and group chief executive Sunny Verghese said the new corporate strategy – for the period to 2024 – builds on an earlier focus on sustainability and digitalisation. "Now, following a comprehensive review, our strategy is fully focused on harnessing these health and ethical sourcing trends, as well as changing consumer preferences. "Crucially, our strategy will allow us to play a leading role in re-imagining global food and agri-supply chains for the better."



Peanuts having their skins removed at a farm in the United States. Olam will invest US\$3.5 billion in 12 segments deemed attractive or proven, such as dairy, nuts, grains and animal feed. PHOTO: OLAM



Olam group CEO Sunny Verghese says the new strategy builds on an earlier focus on digitalisation and sustainability.

Olam said it was looking at "balanced capital allocation with selective integration in the value chain", including an emphasis on mid-stream and value-added ingredients. It plans to allocate about half of its

invested capital – defined as working and fixed capital – in this area in 2024, up from 39 per cent now.

Olam has already made progress in offloading the four segments seen as being no longer compatible with its new strategy.

It halved its stake in an Indonesian sugar-refining subsidiary in December 2017, selling the 50 per cent interest to sugar giant Mitr Phol Sugar Corp for US\$100 million.

Its results for the nine months to Sept 30 last year flagged a lower contribution from its sugar busi-

ness, on both the reduced income from this subsidiary and margin pressures from price competition.

Under the strategic plan, Olam aims to improve its margins through tactics such as cost management and budgeting, which are expected to yield savings of US\$200 million over the course of the programme.

Its financial targets for 2024 include a return on equity of at least 12 per cent, against 9 per cent for the most recently reported full year, to Dec 31, 2017.

Company Briefs

First Sponsor Group

Developer First Sponsor Group has acquired a hotel property in Milan, Italy, for about €9.3 million (\$\$14.4 million) in cash from BNP Paribas real estate investment fund Fondo Kona, according to market filings yesterday before the stock market opened.

The six-storey building with a basement is located at Corso Buenos Aires no 33. The property, which is now vacant and unleased, was formerly a 65-room four-star hotel. Its designated use remains as a hotel.

The purchase price has been paid in full via a wholly owned subsidiary using internal cash resources and credit facilities. Acquisition costs are estimated at €1.4 million, including an insurance premium and taxes paid in relation to the insurance policy.

According to a bourse filing yesterday, First Sponsor does not have information on the book value or net tangible asset value of the property.

As such, the purchase price was derived based on the current property market conditions in Milan, the physical condition of the property, its location, renovation costs, the estimated earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation of the property based on hospitality use, and insurance costs.

Separately, the group also noted that there is ongoing litigation between a former tenant of the property and the seller, with the former alleging that there was a preliminary sale and purchase agreement in relation to the property, and that the seller is obliged but has failed to execute the agreement. The next hearing is expected to be held in March.

Pan Ocean

South Korean carrier Pan Ocean wants to buy two new ships, the company disclosed, after a board resolution was passed yesterday. It had entered a long-term contract to ship iron ore the day prior. The board voted to invest 121.6 billion won (\$\$147 million), or 5.05 per cent of its share capital, towards a shipbuilding contract for two cape-size bulk carriers for long-term cargo contracts.

Singapore-listed Pan Ocean added in its bourse filing that the vessel delivery dates of between Sept 30, 2020, and April 29, 2021, "might be changed, depending on shipbuilding process".

Meanwhile, a freshly inked five-year contract with miner Vale International will see Pan Ocean carry about 8.12 million tonnes of Brazilian iron ore from the second half of 2020.

Pan Ocean most recently reported a net loss of US\$1.68 million (\$\$2.3 million) for the nine months to Sept 30 last year, despite achieving revenue of US\$1.85 billion in that period.

Subaru admits not paying overtime wages to 3,421 staff

In its probe, Subaru found the majority of workers it surveyed said they under-reported overtime hours "so as not to exceed the limit for the budget for overtime work". It said it has since taken steps to ensure workers are unable to falsely report their actual work hours.

TOKYO • Subaru yesterday said it did not pay overtime wages over a two-year period to some 3,400 employees who under-reported their hours, a revelation that surfaced in an internal probe following the 2016 suicide of an overworked employee.

The Japanese automaker, known for its Legacy and Forester cars, said the outstanding wages – from mid-2015 to mid-2017 and totalling 776 million yen (\$\$9.6 million) – were paid retroactively to 3,421 workers last March.

The news was first reported in Japanese media yesterday after representatives of the deceased worker's family disclosed some of the findings this week.

In 2016, a 46-year-old white-collar worker jumped to his death from the roof of a Subaru factory in what the authorities ruled as "karoshi", or death by overwork. At

the time, Subaru was enjoying bumper sales and profit due to the popularity of its cars in the United States, its main market.

In its probe, Subaru found the majority of workers it surveyed said they under-reported overtime hours "so as not to exceed the limit for the budget for overtime work".

It said it has since taken steps to ensure workers are unable to falsely report their actual work hours.

The automaker also said it owed the deceased worker 4.08 million yen in overtime pay, and that it remained in settlement talks with his family.

The pay issue comes after the revelation of governance lapses at the automaker since 2017 involving flawed vehicle inspections. That has led to the recall of hundreds of thousands of cars, pulling down Subaru's profit. REUTERS

Interbank currency rates

Jan 25				
Currencies	Against \$		Against US\$	
	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer
S\$/US\$ to one unit of foreign currency:				
Australian dollar	0.9638	0.9644	0.7099	0.7101
Canadian dollar	1.0195	1.0202	0.7512	0.7510
Euro	1.5371	1.5383	1.1322	1.1327
NZ dollar	0.9196	0.9202	0.6774	0.6776
Sterling pound	1.7783	1.7787	1.3099	1.3104
US dollar	1.3576	1.3581	-	-
US\$/US\$ to 100 units of foreign currency:				
Chinese renminbi	20.0719	20.0849	14.7848	14.7890
Danish kroner	20.5865	20.5972	15.1639	15.1662
Hong Kong dollar	17.30	17.31	12.7445	12.7447
Indian Rupee	191	191	14072	14076
Indonesia rupiah	0.0096	0.0096	0.0071	0.0071
Japanese yen	12364	12373	9107	9111
Korean won	0.1120	0.1121	0.0891	0.0892
Malaysian ringgit	32.87	32.92	24.2131	24.2424
New Taiwan dollar	4.4038	4.4057	3.2438	3.2470
Norwegian krone	15.8533	15.8684	11.6775	11.6843
Philippine peso	25.810	25.824	19.011	19.015
Saudi riyal	36.1969	36.2131	26.6624	26.6645
Swedish krona	14.9715	14.9836	11.0279	11.0328
Swiss franc	136.2779	136.3828	100.3814	100.4218
Thai Baht	4.2867	4.2896	3.1576	3.1586
Source: OICB				

OBITUARIES

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NAM SENG SUPER PROVISION SHOP



YEO TENG KWANG

Age: 93

*passed away peacefully on 24 January 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.*

Wife: Ng Moo Choo

Son:

Joshua Yeo Keng Tong

Daughter-in-law:

Catherine Lee Soy Choo

Daughters:

Yeo Hoon Yee
Yeo Ger Ee
Yeo Ee Mui
Yeo Soi Yee

Sons-in-law:

Kou Liang Ang
Goh Kah Bee (*Deceased*)
Tay Hwa Koong
Kou Liang Yew

Grandsons:

Amos Yeo Chin Siang
Kou Kay Yeow Benjamin
Kou Kay Thai Jeremy
Dexter Tay Junwei
Kou Long Zhao

Granddaughters:

Kou Khor Li Connie
Goh Li Huan Jenna
Goh Li Ling Bernice
Kou Li Tian
Kou Li Lian

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Blk 546 Ang Mo Kio Ave 10, Singapore 560546.

Cortege will leave on Monday, 28 January 2019 at 2.45pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 3.45pm.

26th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



LEE KIM TAH BBM(L), HON FSIB

who left us to be with the Lord
on 26 January 1993.
Always missed by
beloved family and loved ones.

*"... and I will dwell in the
house of the LORD Forever"*

Ps. 23:6

First Anniversary IN LOVING MEMORY OF



GARY OON HONG SIANG
Called home to the Lord on 25 January 2018

Gary we hold you close
within our hearts and there you will remain
to walk with us throughout our lives
until we meet again

Forever cherished by
Beloved wife: Dolly, Sons: Daniel & Gabriel,
Daughter-in-law: Karen,
Grandchildren: Stephanie, Stephen, Stephanie, Sophie
& all loved ones.

With Deepest Sympathy and Heartfelt Condolences to The family of the late



CFC(NS) PANG WEI CHONG, ALOYSIUS
Departed on 23 January 2019

From:
CO and Men of 268SA

With Deepest Sympathy and Heartfelt Condolences to The family of the late



CFC(NS) PANG WEI CHONG, ALOYSIUS
Departed on 23 January 2019

From:
Officers and Men of
Singapore Artillery

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."
Psalm 23:6*



Aloysius Sim Kwee Huat

Age: 49

Was called home to the Lord on 25 January 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Karin Toh

Father:
Joseph Sim Hwa Hong
Son:
Kieran Sim

Mother:
Agnes Teo Siak Khim
Daughters:
Alena Sim
Alexis Sim

Brothers:
Timothy Sim
Christopher Sim
Sisters:
Agnes Sim
Theresa Sim

Sisters-in-law:
Tay Sher-Lyn
Elsa Yang
Brother-in-law:
Adrian Chong

Father-in-law:
Toh Lian Bee
Brother-in-law:
Ken Toh (*deceased*)
Sister-in-law:
Toh Ker Sze

Mother-in-law:
Teo Seow Kum
Sister-in-law:
Rowena Teo
Brother-in-law:
Chua Choon Hian

Uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces,
all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Block 314 Anchorvale Link,
Multi Purpose Hall, Singapore 540314.

Cortege leaves on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 11.15am for
Funeral Mass at Church of the Nativity of the B.V.M. at
12.00pm, thereafter to Mandai Crematorium Hall 2 for
cremation at 1.40pm.

10th Anniversary In Loving Memory Of

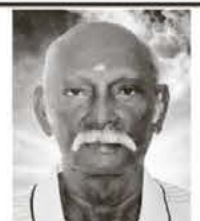
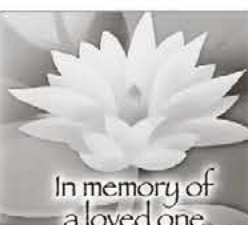


**RAVINDRAN S/O
K. B. MENON**
Lived, laughed
and loved from
1/6/1955 to 26/1/2009

*Those we love don't go
away, they walk
beside us every day,
unseen, unheard,
but always near,
much loved, ever
missed and very dear.*

**Remembering
you always**

**Prebha,
Harish, Satish, Reshmi**
Family and friends.



**Ayyasamy
Shanmugan**

Age: 83
Passed away peacefully on
25 January 2019, dearly missed
and remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Thambiyah Saroja

Daughter:

Menachi Shanmugan

Son-in-law:

Junesh Raman

Grandsons:

Tanush Junesh
Vishwa Junesh

And all relatives and friends.
Appa is resting at Block 347B
Yishun Avenue 11, #06-535,
Singapore 762347.

Cortege leaves on Saturday
26 January 2019 at 3.15pm for
Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 for
cremation at 4.15pm.

Hp: 9223 5814 / 9167 2565

*"Our true home is in heaven, and Jesus Christ whose return
we long for will come from heaven to save us"
Philippians 3:20*



VICKY TJIO POH TIN

Age: 58

was called home to be with the Lord on 24 January 2019,
dearly missed by loved ones.

Husband: Ricky Thia

Father:

Tjio Hai Siong

Sons:

Joshua Thia
Timothy Thia

Daughter:

Lydia Thia

Siblings, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Blk 10B Bedok South Ave 2 S'pore 461010

Nightly services will be held from
26 January 2019 to 29 January 2019 at 8pm.

Cortege will leave on 30 January 2019 (Wed) at 2pm for
Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 3pm.



SAVITHRI PADMANABHAN

Age: 77

Departed on 24 January 2019

Dearly missed by all loved ones.

Husband:

P Padmanabhan (*deceased*)

Son: Mahesan PA

Daughter-in-law: Revathy

Grandsons:

Dharen Nath & Sharen Nath

**All Brothers, Sister, Nephews,
Nieces, Relatives & Friends.**

Dearest Mother & loving

Grandmother is resting at

**BLK 459, JURONG WEST
ST.41, #10-696 S(640459)**

Hp: 82432250 / 94505397

Cortege will leave on Saturday,
26 January 2019 at 4pm for
cremation at Mandai
Crematorium Hall 4 at 5pm.



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SPORT



MARTINA VELOSO
MEET ST ATHLETE
OF THE YEAR
NOMINEE #2 C13

WE ONLY GAVE INPUT ON AGENCIES TO JOC: DENTSU

Ad firm denies recommending Black Tidings, adds that it is not involved with French probe

Sazali Abdul Aziz

Japanese advertising giant Dentsu has distanced itself from claims that it recommended Singapore firm Black Tidings to the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), as French authorities continue their investigation into corruption allegations surrounding the bid for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

JOC head Tsunekazu Takeda was charged this month by French investigating magistrates probing two payments totalling US\$2.3 million (S\$3.13 million) made to Black Tidings before and after the Japanese capital was chosen to host the Olympics in September 2013.

The investigators believe the payments were made to obtain favourable votes from members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Takeda told French authorities on Dec 10 that he played no role in choosing the marketing consultancy firm, and stated that Black Tidings had been recommended by Dentsu, which has an office in downtown Singapore.

Last week, he also denied that he

was aware that Black Tidings had links to Senegalese Papa Massata Diack, who was then a marketing consultant with the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and whose father, former IAAF chief Lamine Diack, was a member of the IOC. Black Tidings' owner, Ian Tan Tong Han, has been reported as a "close business associate" of the younger Diack.

But when asked to confirm its links to the little-known Singapore company, Dentsu's managing director of corporate communications, Shusaku Kannan, told The Straits Times that it only provided feedback on consultancies that had made pitches to the JOC.

"A number of consulting companies made pitches to the bidding committee, after which the committee contacted Dentsu for any information we might have on those consultancies and we told the committee the extent of our knowledge of those consultancies," he said.

He added that Dentsu is not helping the French authorities in their investigations.

Black Tidings, set up in 2006 and terminated in 2014, made the news

Japanese Olympic Committee president Tsunekazu Takeda, who was charged this month, had told French authorities that Singapore consultancy Black Tidings had been recommended by Dentsu.

PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



in 2016 after British newspaper The Guardian reported that French authorities were looking into suspicious payments made by the Tokyo bid team, allegedly to influence the vote to decide the host of the 2020 Olympics.

In 2013, Tokyo beat Madrid and Is-

tanbul to win the hosting rights to the quadrennial Games and become the first Asian city to host the event twice.

An ST investigation in 2016 found that a Housing Board flat in Dakota Crescent was Black Tidings' registered address.

Earlier this month, Tan, 36, was sentenced to a week's jail for giving false information to a Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau officer who was probing the flow of funds in and out of the company.

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ONLY GAVE FEEDBACK

The bidding committee contacted Dentsu for any information we might have on those consultancies and we told the committee the extent of our knowledge of those consultancies.

SHUSAKU KANNAN, managing director of corporate communications at Dentsu, on his firm's involvement with Black Tidings and the Japanese Olympic Committee.

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Mixed doubles pair Astra Sharma and John-Patrick Smith will play third seeds Barbora Krejickova and Rajeev Ram in the final today. The duo have praised each other's technical ability ahead of the clash.
PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/ASTRASHARMA



Australian Open 2019

A GRAND SLAM FINALIST WITH S'PORE LINKS

Born and raised here, Australian debutante Sharma eyes history in dream final with mixed doubles partner Smith

Rohit Brijnath
Assistant Sports Editor
In Melbourne

The fourth-fastest serve in the women's draw at the Australian Open was delivered by a young woman who is partly powered by Hainanese chicken rice. Well, her mum taught her how to cook it. And, she adds with a grin, roast pork rice as well.

Her name is Astra Sharma and she's half-Indian, half-Chinese and fully talented. She's an Australian citizen, was born and raised in Singapore, speaks Singlish now and then at home, and is an athletic resident of the tennis court.

And at this Open, this amiable 23-year-old child of a former artillery officer is, well, firing nicely.

Today, she and Australian partner John-Patrick Smith will play third seeds Barbora Krejickova and American Rajeev Ram in the mixed doubles final. In her very first Slam she is in a Grand Slam final. It's a

TAKING ON THE BEST

I think that my 'B' game, if that makes sense, is good enough. I don't have to play bigger, I don't have to do more on a bigger stage, I can just play my game, I'm good enough to play with these (tour) girls.



ASTRA SHARMA, who also made it to the second round in the women's singles, is confident about her game.

long way for a Tampines girl born at East Shore Hospital.

"I'm speechless," she said later. "I had zero expectations and now I'm absolutely over the moon." Sharma didn't even think she was playing in the mixed doubles and now the Perth player is earning headlines in The West Australian newspaper.

Sharma praised her partner Smith, saying, "JP sees and reads the court so well" and he, at 30 the more experienced player, repaid the compliment, saying: "She's fearless, she goes for her shots and goes for her serves."

During the final today, her mother, Susan Tan, who was a student sprinter from St Theresa's Convent, will be courtside, but her father, Devdutt, a semi-retired acoustic engineer, will be in Singapore.

He's a former high jumper, a Raffles Institution boy and National University of Singapore graduate, who left Singapore in 2005, not because he foresaw a life in sport for his kids but because he wished a different life for his family that includes son Ashwin and daughter Tara.

Astra played football, chose tennis and studied at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, where she still trains with coach Geoff McDonauld. She's 23, the world No. 230 and has taken a step at the Open which surprised even her parents.

As Devdutt said: "This was a big shift, to the next level, and I didn't foresee it." Added Susan: "It's a little surprising but I also know her abilities and what she's capable of doing. It was a question of whether she could carry it off."

Sharma swept through the Aus-

tralian Open singles qualifying, dismissing Vera Zvonareva, Varvara Flink and finally Irina Khromacheva 12-10 in the third tie-breaker.

In the main draw, she beat Priscilla Hon in 129 sweaty, scorching minutes, then lost to the talented Greek Maria Sakkari but has since rolled through the mixed doubles without dropping a set.

It's only her first experience at a Major, walking the corridors littered with greats, adjusting to the noise and enormity of it, and it has been - as she told The Straits Times - a great education.

"I think that my 'B' game, if that makes sense, is good enough. I don't have to play bigger, I don't have to do more on a bigger stage, I can just play my game, I'm good enough to play with these (tour) girls."

Today of course she will be nervous as she was initially before her semi-final when she walked onto Rod Laver Arena for the first time. Lanky - she is 178cm - and well-spoken, she grinned and said: "I was shaking in my boots."

She doesn't have experience, but she seems to enjoy the occasion and as her mother said: "She's mentally very tough, she just goes on and on and on."

And of course, she has the serve. That fourth-fastest one, by the way, was at 191kmh. Same speed as Serena Williams' fastest at this Open. But let's not be too surprised. Astra, after all, means weapon.

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SportsWorld

Cardiff and EPL to pay tribute to Sala

LONDON • Cardiff will pay tribute to their missing forward Emiliano Sala before their Premier League clash at Arsenal on Tuesday, the Welsh club's chief executive Ken Choo said.

Sala, who was signed from Nantes last Saturday for a club-record fee of £15 million (\$\$26.6 million), was on board a plane which disappeared over the English Channel on Monday night.

Rescuers have since ended their search, but Choo confirmed the club would be remembering him at their next two games, while the Premier League also said there would be a moment of silence during all matches next week. REUTERS

Jardim set to replace Henry at Monaco

MONACO • Thierry Henry was suspended by Monaco on Thursday amid widespread reports the former France striker will lose his job after only three months in charge at the French Ligue 1 club.

Monaco, who appointed the former Arsenal great to replace Leonardo Jardim in October, have picked up only two points in their last five league games and sit second from bottom in the table.

Ironically, Jardim is set to take over the hot seat again after agreeing terms on a 2½-year deal, L'Equipe reported. REUTERS

Scaloni hopeful of Messi's return

BUENOS AIRES • Argentina interim coach Lionel Scaloni revealed he had a "good feeling" about Lionel Messi's possible return to the international fold amid multiple reports that the Barcelona forward will end his self-imposed exile.

Messi took a sabbatical from the national team after another disappointing World Cup last year, with Argentina crashing out to France in the second round.

While the 31-year-old has not said whether he will return for the Copa America in Brazil in June, Scaloni hinted Messi could return for their friendly against Venezuela on March 22. REUTERS

Adrian has cancer but aims for Tokyo 2020

LOS ANGELES • American five-time Olympic champion swimmer Nathan Adrian, 30, said on Thursday he has testicular cancer but is confident of recovery and wants to compete at the 2020 Tokyo Games.

In a statement on Twitter, the 2012 100m freestyle gold medalist said he expects to be back swimming within "weeks" after starting treatment. Adrian, who also has four Olympic relay gold medals, also revealed his illness had been diagnosed early and "the prognosis is good". AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Sports writing legend McIlvanney dies at 84

LONDON • British sports writing legend Hugh McIlvanney, whose words "were a window to the lives" of champions according to Muhammad Ali, died at the age of 84 yesterday.

The Football Writers' Association, of which McIlvanney was a life member, confirmed the news on Twitter, calling him "one of the true greats of sports writing".

The Scot's gravelly tones also lit up several documentaries on sporting greats and he became friends with Ali after covering the "Rumble in The Jungle" fight in 1974. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Australian Open 2019

LITTLE SEPARATES KVITOVA AND OSAKA IN FINAL



There is a cold-bloodedness behind the considerable charm of the two finalists. Petra Kvitová, 28, has won her last eight tournament finals while Naomi Osaka, 21, has 59 straight wins after winning the first set. PHOTOS: EPA-EFE

Both have different strengths but what is common is their hunger to win another Slam

Rohit Brijnath
Assistant Sports Editor
In Melbourne

Only the final acts of an Open are to be written and the corridors are quieter. The crowds have thinned and the outside courts are mostly soundless playgrounds. Umpires' chairs sit mournfully empty and a faint music trails through the buildings. The litter has been swept up and with it the shards of unfulfilled ambitions. Only one person can win, 126 women have left and two remain.

Naomi Osaka and Petra Kvitová. They are 21 and 28 and are dreamers who will scrap for a trophy named for a woman who died tragically at 29. Daphne Akhurst was a pianist of potential, who won five Australian Open women's championships, and to lift the trophy that bears her name is to honour history while making it.

A Grand Slam event is all light and hope as it begins but now the hours are stitched with tension. No one wants to make the runner-up speech. Kvitová has not been practising on her days off and so she rested yesterday. Routine has become superstition. Osaka, perhaps, went for a walk.

At a passing glance, these women are without similarity: Czech vs Japanese, leftie vs rightie, 182cm vs 180cm. The Czech has been waiting for over four years for her third Slam, the Japanese four months for her second. One is reclaiming her name, the other stamping hers. There is no machine yet to measure hunger but be sure it is equal here.

Statistically we can dissect them into a hundred pieces but little separates them. Osaka has more muscle on average on her first serve (172kmh to Kvitová's 163) but her second is more vulnerable (128kmh to 150). She has 50 aces in 15 sets, the Czech 26 in 12. Maybe

the key lies in who returns better.

A correspondent from Jane's Armour and Artillery may be in the stands because they will have heard about these forehands. Shots are not fired by these women but shells. Osaka's forehand looks meaner, Kvitová's more fluid.

The Game Insight Group, formed by Tennis Australia in partnership with Victoria University, which does research into tennis, tells The Straits Times that Osaka's average forehand speed through six matches was 119kmh and Kvitová's 120. Finely matched is not a theory but a fact.

Each camp has muscle to flex. Osaka has 59 straight wins after winning the first set and Kvitová has won her last eight tournament finals. There is a cold-bloodedness behind their considerable charm.

The real dilemma of this final, of course, is their collective niceness. Taking sides in a contest is fun as fans cheer and groan, leap and slump, but here people are torn. Who to choose? Because Osaka is sweet and Kvitová is kind, both of them relatable, gentle, humble folk who simply hit a ball with fury.

The Japanese bows to no one, lets

her coach say whatever he wants and has proved to cynics the US Open was no fluke. An MRI of the Czech will show there is not a mean bone in her body and she remains a study in courage after refining her nerve and form after a knife-wielding intruder almost severed her racket-hand fingers in late 2016.

Kvitová walked into her press conference yesterday and started with a breezy "hello". Last year she lost here in the first round, now she is in the final. It is a verification of her talent and proof of her effort.

"You know," she said, "there are kind of moments and days where I didn't really think very positively that I can be in the final of the Grand Slam any more. It took me a little while, five years to get there, which is not really easy. That's probably the best thing that I really proved."

The Japanese player's coach, Sascha Bajin, then showed up and offered a glimpse into the latest-model Osaka that he is building. To vigour he is adding versatility. "Maybe," he said, "it was a little bit more like telling her there are other things out there than just hitting very hard."

"We worked on her angles. We worked on just a little bit more of everything. Slicing, you know. Kind of like wanted her to come in a little bit more. Just a little bit of everything."

If you have a heart condition, this match might not be for you. Winners might rain like confetti or errors may collect like garbage. Both ladies will be focused on dominating the rally early and usually operate in sixth gear. Think Lamborghini with no brake pedal.

The legendary Maureen Connolly, who won nine Grand Slam titles and also died too young at 34, wrote in her book: "I hated my opponents. This was no passing dislike, but a powerful and consuming hate." The Czech and the Japanese do not seem built like that and yet they stand in front of each other's dream and a chance to be No. 1.

This is the lovely truth of individual sport on final day. To outdo each other, solve each other, show off to each other and steal the prize from each other. And so it's kind of nice that these women have never played each other.

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World No. 1 Novak Djokovic beat Frenchman Lucas Pouille 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 over three mercifully quick sets to reach the Australian Open final against 'greatest rival' Rafael Nadal. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Deadly Djokovic demolishes powerless Pouille

MELBOURNE • Novak Djokovic left Lucas Pouille in a heap after three mercifully quick sets to reach his seventh Australian Open final – where he has never lost – and his dazzling performance will have given Rafael Nadal much to think about before tomorrow.

The world No. 1 was magnificent yesterday and as ruthless as he has been in any win since his outstanding year in 2011.

He started the match with an ace and drilled 24 winners past his bewildered opponent en route to a 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 demolition job.

The loser succinctly put it later: "He just played amazing."

The winner's verdict was almost mystical in its interpretation.

The Serb said: "Every professional athlete wants to be in the zone, where everything flows so effortlessly and you are executing automatically everything you are intending to execute."

"You don't need to think too much. I guess you're driven by some force that takes over you and you feel divine, you feel like in a different dimension. It's quite an awesome feeling that we all try to reach and stay in."

In truth, it was a mismatch.

As a public execution, it would have drawn an awed crowd. As a

warning to his Spanish rival, it was tantamount to a declaration of war.

So, the most blood-spattered rivalry in tennis – across 52 matches – is extended in a perfect setting: a major final between the top two players in the game.

Djokovic leads their personal tally by two, while Nadal has 17 major titles to his opponent's 14.

Asked if he was trying to better Nadal's 6-2, 6-4, 6-0 win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas the previous day, he simply said: "Yes."

A seventh Melbourne Park title would put him alongside Roger Federer and Roy Emerson in Australian tennis history, but Nadal, who has

gone through this tournament like a hot knife through butter, will not be blown away like Pouille was – unless he is struck down by injury, as he was in the last eight last year.

His history with Djokovic is long and glory-filled. In 2012, at the same Major, they played in one of the great finals in the history of the sport – the longest Grand Slam decider of them all at 5hr 53min.

When asked how he would describe that titanic battle to his children, Djokovic smiled and said: "I'll probably not have them sit down and watch it because I don't like my children to watch TV that long."

"But I would probably present it

in more a general concept of our rivalry. That match would be the icing on the cake. Throughout my life and career, Nadal been the greatest rival that I played against on all surfaces."

Pouille wants his tormentor to go on and win, to validate his own effort. But he is not predicting another blitz in the final.

"When he's (Djokovic) playing like this, he's the best in the world," Pouille said. "We'll see on Sunday because Rafa looks pretty amazing, too." THE GUARDIAN

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Nominee #2: Martina Lindsay Veloso (Shooting)

It's mind over matter for her

Shooter shows growing maturity and cool head to win 2 Commonwealth Games golds

Sazali Abdul Aziz

It seems nonsensical to call any 19-year-old an old head and yet that is exactly what Martina Lindsay Veloso is.

The Singapore shooter is still nine months away from turning 20 and does not even have a driver's licence, but she has been one of the more recognisable faces in her sport for almost five years.

Since first making waves in 2014 as the youngest winner of a World Cup leg at age 14, she has racked up accolade after accolade on the regional and international stage.

Last year, she added another illustrious feather to her cap. She won two golds at the Commonwealth Games – in the 10m air rifle and 50m rifle prone – to be the top Singapore athlete on the Gold Coast.

To properly digest the scale of her achievement, consider this: The average age of the last four winners of the 50m event is 40.25. Veloso is not even half of that.

Then again, she insists: “To me, age is not a factor in shooting.

“You can do well regardless of age, height, size or whatever, and it's really quite unique in that way.

“It's more of a mental test.”

That ability, in a sport where margins are so fine that an untimely twitch could mean silver instead of gold, was cited as a key factor for her victories in Australia.

Said Singapore Shooting Association high performance manager Jeanine Heng: “Over the last four years, she has developed the maturity and ability to manage the expectations and pressure in competition.”

Yet, when asked to describe her 2018 in one word, she purses her lips, breaks into a wry smile, and answers: “Bittersweet.”

Why? “I had my moments, of course... Winning the double golds at the Commonwealth Games, finishing in the finals of World Cup (South Korea and Munich legs), where I also set the junior world record for the 50m rifle three-positions event.

“But the bitter part was trying to cope with the expectation and pressure going into the Asian Games and World Championships.”



National shooter Martina Lindsay Veloso, 19, first made waves in 2014 as the youngest winner of a World Cup leg at age 14. Last year, she won two of Singapore's five golds at the Commonwealth Games. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

At last August's Asiad, she was sixth in the 10m air rifle and eighth in the 50m rifle three-positions in Indonesia. At the World Championships, where Tokyo 2020 Olympic spots were up for grabs, she was 30th in the 10m and 20th in the 50m in South Korea.

But Singapore's 2015 Sportsgirl of the Year is ready to rebound to reach even greater heights this year. She will graduate from her sports and wellness diploma course at Nanyang Polytechnic in March, and plans to take a gap year to focus on trying for the Olympics before she pursues a university degree.

Between next month and August, she will compete in World Cup legs in New Delhi, Beijing, Munich and Rio de Janeiro and, in November, the quadrennial Asian Championships in Doha – all of which offer a route to Tokyo.

In December, she will attempt to add to her two SEA Games gold medals in the Philippines.

Now that she no longer has to juggle school commitments with her six-day training regimen, she says with a cheeky grin that she will finally have time to try and earn the right to get behind a wheel.

“I got my diving licence before my driving one,” she dead-panned, referring to how she became a licensed open-water diver in Bali last month.

“I've never really been able to shoot full-time so, from April, it's another new experience and another challenge.”

Judging by how frequently she has hit the targets she sets – did we mention she is a junior black belt in taekwondo? – it is not too far-fetched to imagine more milestones, and that elusive driver's licence, awaiting Veloso in the not-too-distant future.

msazali@sph.com.sg

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QUADRUPLE TALK IS FANTASY: GUARDIOLA

City boss completely focused on FA Cup tie at hand, promises 'strong team' against Burnley

LONDON • Pep Guardiola is not prepared to entertain any “fantasy” talk of an unprecedented quadruple despite Manchester City being the only English team still in the hunt for four trophies.

His men have booked their place in the League Cup final, where they will meet Chelsea on Feb 24, while they sit four points behind leaders Liverpool in the race for the Premier League title.

They will also return to Champions League action next month with

a favourable last-16 draw against German Bundesliga side Schalke.

Today, City play Burnley at the Etihad Stadium in the FA Cup fourth round – the only domestic competition Guardiola has yet to win since taking over in 2016.

But, while their impressive form over the first half of the campaign has City supporters dreaming of success on a level yet to be achieved in English football, the manager was in no mood to entertain such prospects at his pre-match press

4

Average goals per game Manchester City have netted in their last seven FA Cup matches in the third and fourth rounds.

conference yesterday.

The Spaniard told reporters: “We are able to try to win tomorrow. That is all I can assure you. Anything else is fantasy.”

“Always we try to have a strong team. The fact it is against a Premier League (team) like Burnley, we are going to play with the best team to win the game, we believe.”

The 48-year-old, whose side were stunned by Wigan in the fifth round of the FA Cup last season, will not be taking any risks against Sean Dyche’s men.

Despite fielding a host of youth-team players, including Philippe Sandler, Eric Garcia and Ian Poveda, in their midweek League

Cup win over Burton Albion, Guardiola categorically ruled against using them for the second successive game.

Revealing “tomorrow, there will be no players from the academy”, he said: “They have to be prepared just in case.”

“But we now have everyone fit except Vinny (Kompany), everyone can play.”

One senior player who did feature at the Pirelli Stadium was defender Benjamin Mendy, who came off the bench after two months out with a knee injury, and Guardiola confirmed that he was in line to play against the Claret.

He also responded to the imminent sacking of his former player at Barcelona, Thierry Henry, who has been suspended by Monaco after a dismal three-month spell in charge of the French Ligue One club, claiming it was “not my business”.

Guardiola added: “I don’t understand it, but I’m not there when people take decisions.”

“I know him well and I’m so sorry for him. He is an exceptional person.”

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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TODAY

Accrington v Derby

Ch111, 8.30pm

Man City v Burnley

Ch111, 11pm

Newcastle v Watford

Ch112, 11pm

Shrewsbury v Wolves

Ch113, 11pm

Millwall v Everton

Ch111, tomorrow, 1.30am

TOMORROW

Crystal Palace v Tottenham

Ch111, 11.55pm

Chelsea v Sheffield Wednesday

Ch111, Monday, 2am

All on Singtel TV

Hazard claims he’s a ‘leader’ in wake of Sarri criticism

LONDON • Eden Hazard felt that his starring role in Chelsea’s 2-1 win over Tottenham in the second leg of their League Cup semi-final before a 4-2 penalty shoot-out victory proved his leadership qualities.

The hosts overcame a 1-0 first-leg deficit to set up a meeting with Manchester City on Feb 24, with Maurizio Sarri’s men reacting impressively after they were accused of lacking “battling and fighting qualities” in the defeat at Arsenal on Jan 20.

Hazard, who was restored to the flank, was outstanding as Chelsea surged to a 2-0 half-time lead fol-

lowing goals from the forward and N’Golo Kante.

Fernando Llorente pulled one back for Spurs after the break, but the Blues’ clinical edge from the spot saw them book their 15th Cup final in 17 years on Thursday.

This was the first year away goals have not counted in the semi-final stage since 1980.

Sarri suggested in the build-up to the game that, while a wonderfully gifted footballer, Hazard was more of “an individual player”.

The Italian later claimed reaching the first major final of his coaching career would breathe new “enthusi-

asm” into Chelsea’s season and he had not been seeking to criticise his players.

But Belgium international Hazard was adamant that he “did not care” about his manager’s assessment, insisting that “on the pitch, I’m a leader”.

He said in a post-game interview: “My job on the pitch is to do what I can do. Today, I did, so I am just happy.”

“(In) the meeting we had before the game, we talked about going through and playing in the final. Now, we are in the final so we are just happy.”



Following the League Cup semi-final win over Tottenham, Eden Hazard is now looking forward to next month’s final against Manchester City in the belief that Chelsea can defeat the Cup holders.
PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Looking ahead to the Wembley final next month, Hazard admitted that while “it was always hard” against City as “they are the best

team in the Premier League at the moment, (along) with Liverpool”, the final would likely be a “50-50 game”.

He added: “They win a lot of trophies in the last five or six years, but we also have a great team.”
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, THE GUARDIAN



Qatar’s Abdulaziz Hatem (No. 6) celebrating his goal against South Korea during their 1-0 Asian Cup quarter-final win yesterday, as Korean captain Son Heung-min can only look on. The goal was enough to see the Qataris progress to the last four at the expense of the pre-tournament favourites.
PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Asian Cup 2019

Lippi earns sympathy despite reign ending on gloomy note

SHANGHAI • The search is now on for another big name to take on the poisoned chalice that is the Chinese national football coaching position, after a livid Marcello Lippi ended his reign following their humiliating exit at the Asian Cup.

The World Cup-winning coach stepped down after Thursday’s 3-0 quarter-final loss to Iran, with the Italian making known his displeasure at the nature of the defeat.

Slamming their wretched defending, he said: “You cannot afford to

give a team like Iran three goals. You just can’t legislate for that kind of thing. I really wish it didn’t have to end on such a gloomy note.”

Lippi, who was reportedly among the world’s best-paid coaches, took over the reins in October 2016, but won only 12 of his 31 games, underlining the task facing him.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, a known football fan, has vowed to make the country of 1.4 billion people a competitive force with resources being thrown at the grass-

roots level. But they remain in the doldrums, having reached the World Cup only once, in 2002.

The gulf between 29th-ranked Iran and China, in 76th, was yet more glaring evidence that Chinese fans, who regularly criticise the team as “an embarrassment”, had to temper their expectations due to the paucity of quality players.

There was, however, sympathy for the departed Lippi, who thrice won the Chinese Super League title with Guangzhou Evergrande.

In an online poll immediately after he quit, about 75 per cent of supporters expressed satisfaction with his tenure, even though he failed to steer them to last year’s World Cup.

The hashtag #feelsorryforLippi was trending on Weibo, China’s equivalent of Twitter, reflecting the fondness many still hold for the 2006 World Cup winner with the Azzurri.

He also received backing from Iran counterpart Carlos Queiroz, who called Lippi “one of the best

coaches in football history”.

The Portuguese, whose side will play Japan in the Cup semi-finals on Monday, said: “The work that he did was fantastic. China made a great evolution under Lippi.”

As for his successor, the Chinese Football Association appears committed to hiring foreign expertise, and it is likely to turn to another renowned coach.

One name China may consider is Sven-Goran Eriksson, who had coached three Chinese clubs from

2013-2017 and whose “short-term engagement” as the Philippines’ coach ended yesterday.

The Swede took the post only in October, but Philippine Football Federation general secretary Edwin Gastanes said he was still “available for consultation”.

Yesterday, joint favourites South Korea were shocked 1-0 by 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar, with Abdulaziz Hatem settling their quarter-final tie with a long-range strike.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PAIGEL MOVES TO DENVER TO TRAIN FOR SEA GAMES

Skater takes gap year from Sports School to link up with American coach; targets podium finish at Games

Nicole Chia

Pagiel Sng's list of firsts this year includes him relocating to Denver, Colorado, competing in the senior men's category of the National Figure Skating Championships and, if selected, being Singapore's first male figure skater at the Nov 30-Dec 11 SEA Games.

The 14-year-old, who left for Colorado earlier this week, met the SEA Games qualification mark last month with a technical element score of 20.26 for the short programme and 31.09 for the free skate at the 51st Golden Spin competition in Zagreb, Croatia.

The SEA Games qualifying score is 19.06 for the short programme and 30.80 for the free skate.

Pagiel's scores in Zagreb were personal bests, and he told The Straits Times that finding out he had bettered the SEA Games qualifying mark was akin to receiving a Christmas gift.

The Singapore Sports School (SSP) student said: "It will be a dream come true for me to represent Singapore at the SEA Games."

"When I learnt that I could be making my debut at the Games, I was excited as I'd be one of Singapore's history-makers as the first Singaporean male figure skater."

"This news has motivated me to train harder, but I also hope this will spur my teammates and (other) young male skaters to dream big and strive for their goals."

Pagiel is targeting a podium finish at the biennial SEA Games in the Philippines this year, should he be given the nod by the Singapore National Olympic Council.

He believes his move to Colorado, where his coach Robi Chalmers is based, will help.

Said Pagiel, who picked up the sport at age five: "Training at high altitude will help me improve my stamina and fitness level."

"I hope to improve my skating skills, increase my repertoire of elements, and be stronger physically and mentally. I am also working on new programmes in preparation for the upcoming competitions."

American Chalmers was formerly the Singapore Ice Skating Association's (Sisa) figure skating director and coach.

She will be Pagiel's head coach, with the teenager also working with Scott Brown (choreography), Jessica Melton (spins), and Erik Schulz (jumps on harness).

The decision to relocate and take a gap year from school was made in consultation with Chalmers and the SSP, said Pagiel, who expressed gratitude to both parties as well as his parents and Sisa for their support.

"I needed more ice sessions and (a) higher level of training," he added. "Skaters overseas of similar age to me were getting up to 40 hours of training a week – about four times of what I am able to do in Singapore."

Sisa president Sonja Chong wished Pagiel well for his Denver stint, saying: "Despite his young age, Pagiel is displaying maturity in his work attitude, and it shows in the significant improvements he's making and his growing confidence."

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A HIGHER LEVEL OF TRAINING

Skaters overseas of similar age to me were getting up to 40 hours of training a week – about four times of what I am able to do in Singapore.



PAGIEL SNG, figure skater, on his decision to relocate to Colorado.

Pagiel Sng, who left for the United States earlier this week, met the SEA Games qualification mark last month with a technical element score of 20.26 for the short programme and 31.09 for the free skate at the 51st Golden Spin competition in Zagreb, Croatia.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PHOBUS SNG

Close to 10,000 on board SportSG's Active Health Labs

Sazali Abdul Aziz

Some 9,567 people have been "on-boarded" at Active Health Labs over the last year, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) said in a review earlier this week of its work last year.

This is up from about 2,200 in March last year, after the first of two Active Health Labs was opened at Our Tampines Hub in August 2017. A second lab, at Heartbeat@Bedok, was opened last February.

The labs are part of the Active Health movement by Sport Singapore (SportSG), which aims to promote ownership of one's health.

Onboarding is a process where a person's current health and fitness levels are assessed, allowing experts to personalise wellness plans such as exercises or lifestyle habits.

In total, the movement has reached over 80,000 people through roadshows and community events, added the MCCY.

MCCY Minister Grace Fu said that while the numbers are a "good start for the first year", the movement also plays an important social role.

She said: "It's not just about getting the individual interested in taking ownership of his own health and exercise regimen... It's also about building social ties between

people who may not know each other, even though they may be from the same neighbourhood."

"If you're going through the onboarding with 20 other people, we're hoping that the social bonds, the peer relationships will help the individual carry on with his health and exercise regimen better."

She added: "Numbers are good but, when we review a success of a programme, we put qualitative KPIs (key performance indicators) around it."

"Do the people keep to a regimen after they undergo an onboarding session? Do they take up regular exercise? Sleep and eat better? Is it better done through a doctor nudg-

ing or a friend?"

Participants who undergo onboarding at an Active Health Lab can choose to attend a customised 12-week programme, clinics, or an array of programme offerings from ActiveSG that meets their needs.

A SportSG spokesman said 535 participants have completed the 12-week course, with results showing that on average, participants saw improvements in body mass index and systolic blood pressure, as well as reduced waist circumference.

The spokesman added: "Many participants enjoyed the free and easy access to sport and exercise experts who are able to provide them personalised tips and advice based on health measurements obtained through onboarding."

SportSG plans to set up four more Active Health Labs at sports centres in Jurong East, Sengkang, Bishan and Woodlands before the end of the year.

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InGoodConscience

Sala, the best player Cardiff never had



Rob Hughes

There is something haunting about writing about someone you have never met and never saw play except through TV. Yet hour by hour, day after day this week, we have been caught in a depressing, almost voyeuristic disaster, listening to bulletins that had nothing to tell us.

No sight nor sound of Emiliano Sala, the Argentinian striker who made the biggest move of his life by signing for Cardiff City last weekend. No word, either, of Dave Ibbotson, the English pilot of the single-engine Piper PA-46 Malibu plane taking him from his former club FC Nantes to Cardiff.

The flight should have lasted less than 1½ hours. But Monday, then Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday passed. The search was stepped up, the silence was ominous.

Finally, David Barker, the harbour master of Guernsey island where the plane had disappeared off the radar, spoke: "Despite the best efforts of air and search assets from the Channel Islands, UK and France covering an area of approximately 1,700 square miles – with a significant amount of this searched more than once – and having examined mobile phone data and satellite imagery, we have been unable to find any trace of the aircraft, the pilot or the passenger."

Three planes, five helicopters, two lifeboats, passing ships and fishing boats have scoured the ocean. The freezing sea temperature would not have supported life and, in any case, the harbour master calculated that if the plane went down where it was last recorded, it could be lost on the sea bed 100 metres down.

"We have taken the difficult decision to end the search," he had to say.

"Next of kin have been informed of this development, and my thoughts go out to the family of the pilot and passenger."

In Nantes, where Sala had scored 48 goals in 130 games and, in Cardiff, who had paid a club-record fee of £15 million (\$26.6 million) for him, the build-up of wreaths and remembrance had long begun.

A Cardiff supporter for more than 50 years, Robert Graves, found the words to say what many were thinking.

"He's going to be remembered as the best player we never had," said Graves.

Never had. Barely knew. Yet the player and the pilot whose fates had thrown together will long be remembered.

Sala was 28. Ibbotson was 59. We may never know what went wrong up there in the sky over the channel, although informed guesswork centres on the propeller of this light craft's single engine becoming frozen by ice.

There is unlikely to be a black box flight recorder (as there would be on commercial planes) to find. There is the speculation, from the pilot's own Facebook message to a friend, that he felt "a bit rusty" operating the ILS (Instrument Landing System).

And the eerie last thoughts that Sala committed to both Instagram and WhatsApp.

Along with a photograph of himself with teammates he was leaving behind in Nantes with the poignant message:

"La ultima ciao @FCNantes"

The last goodbye.

Once aboard, and in the air, Sala's audio message to his mother and father, his brother and sister back in Santa Fe, Argentina were almost unbearably prescient. "I'm here on a plane that looks like it's about to fall apart, and I'm going to Cardiff, crazy," he texted.

"If in an hour and a half you have no news, I don't know if they are going to send someone to look for me because they can't find me... Dad, how scared am I!"

Haunting, indeed. We knew so little about this man, this player who had struggled in Argentina, in France and Italy and Portugal to reach the big time, the big money in his game.

His idol was Gabriel Batistuta. In Europe, Sala was an avaricious reader (his favourite book was The Motorcycle Diaries cataloguing Che Guevara's student years). He was interested in Chinese philosophy, and he entertained his teammates on guitar.

He left Argentina at 15 to seek his fortune. A video compilation from Nantes shows him to be tall, lean and single-minded inside the penalty box, shooting without hesitation from right foot or left, and head.

Berenice Schkair, a fashion model in Argentina and his former girlfriend, put out a tweet intimating at something more sinister. "Do not stop looking!!!" she posted. "Because I do not think it's an accident."

Media outlets showed a screenshot from her (later removed from the account) suggesting the "football mafia" was involved.

Sala's mother, Mercedes, said simply: "He was so happy... The best moment of his life."

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We knew so little about this man, this player who had struggled in Argentina, in France and Italy and Portugal to reach the big time, the big money in his game. Yet the player and the pilot whose fates had thrown together will long be remembered.

COE ACADEMIES TO GROOM TALENT

Bowling federation to relinquish training of national development squad to industry

David Lee

The national keglers walked on to the Singapore Bowling @ Rifle Range bowling alley decked out in Pokemon onesies last night but, with world champions and major Games gold medallists among them, they are not known for clowning around on the lanes.

One key factor behind the Singapore Bowling Federation's (SBF) success on the international stage is its centres of excellence (COE)

programme, which has steadily supplied talents like 2015 World Open winner Joey Yeo and Singapore Nationals champion Jomond Chia.

At last night's COE Day where more than 300 bowlers, parents and coaches marked the 10th anniversary of the scheme, SBF president Jessie Phua revealed that the next wave of national development squad (NDS) players will be farmed out to COE academies in the next two to three years.

To do so, the SBF will develop its Level 4 and 5 coaching certification

programmes to equip these private coaches with the necessary skill sets such as sports psychology, nutrition, communication, as well as equipment and lane knowledge.

At the event where the SBF's commercial arm also launched the fully automated Chef-In-Box Vend Cafe, Phua told The Straits Times: "After 10 years, it is a good time for a review, move to the next step, and up the ante.

"We want to relinquish the training of aspiring bowlers back to the industry so Singapore Bowling can focus on the national training squad, those who are ready for major Games and the world stage.

"We want to raise the bar for everyone so we can focus on winning

medals, as we leave it to the community, with guided assistance, to focus on the development part."

In 2008, SBF partnered the Singapore Sports School for its first COE. Since then, it has launched 10 more with private academies. Now, more than 200 bowlers participate in the annual skills assessment for NDS selection.

Phua shared that the reason for creating the COE programme was so that coaches from different academies could teach a common curriculum to their bowlers.

She added: "Whenever we had new bowlers in our national team, they would come from different schools and had been taught different philosophies. Year after year,

we had to go back to zero and get them to relearn.

"So, we wanted to engage the private coaches, sell our curriculum to them so that by the time the athletes come in, they hit the ground running.

"Doing this, we also help to raise the bar for coaches in terms of technical knowledge and industry engagement, so it is a very good level-up for everyone in the ecosystem.

"If the industry is ready to step up to this challenge and advancement, it is a wonderful place to be in because then we have a fantastic group we can tap on, and recruit for our team of national coaches."

One of the first private operators to sign a COE academy endorse-

ment agreement with the SBF in 2012 was Strike Academy, whose co-founder Don Chan credited the COE programme for uniting a fragmented community.

He said: "In the early years, some coaches felt they needed to think of their own interest. When athletes were taken away from them for the national team, they might have felt that their livelihood was affected.

"So it is good the SBF was able to structure something for everybody and engage the whole community. It was then up to us to adapt to this structure and achieve greater things moving in the same right direction together."

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The national women's bowling team – under the Carrying Moments banner – sharing about Project Uplift, an initiative to buy, pack and distribute festive packs to the less fortunate this Chinese New Year, during last night's COE Day celebration. The event marked the 10th anniversary of the Singapore Bowling Federation's Centres of Excellence (COE) programme. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

Fitter and stronger Woods targets more wins in 2019

SAN DIEGO • A year ago, Tiger Woods was ranked world No. 647 when he arrived at Torrey Pines Golf Course.

He was coming off career-threatening spinal-fusion surgery, had not won on the PGA Tour in the past five years and was happy just to be playing after another long layoff.

Woods said earlier this week that the operation to fuse two vertebrae in his lower back was "the last-ditch effort to give me quality of life" even if it did not allow him to compete at the highest level again.

That was why he had low expectations heading into 2018 and said he was "pleased" to finish tied for 23rd at the Farmers Insurance Open.

A year later, much has changed, including Woods' expectations.

He made his season debut on Thursday, again at Torrey Pines, but this time, coming off a season of steady progress that culminated in his September victory at the Tour Championship in Atlanta – his 80th PGA Tour title but first since 2013.

The former world No. 1 shot a

two-under 70 at the South Course in the opening round, putting him eight shots behind the leader, Spain's Jon Rahm, in a tie for 53rd.

But he seemed anything but discouraged to catch the leaders in a field featuring 12 of the world's top 20, including No. 7 Rahm who set a renovated North Course record with a 62. One shot back is world No. 1 Justin Rose, who also played on the North.

Woods, 43, said: "This year, it's totally different. I have a great understanding of what I can and can't do. There's not the uncertainty I had going into the year last year, after what I did at the end of last year.

"I know what I'm feeling, so now it's about finishing a little better and winning some events."

On Thursday, he made five birdies and three bogeys, driving the ball well until midway through the back nine when he missed three consecutive tee shots to the right.

After his win in the Tour Championship, Woods had played competitively only three times.

He revealed that he used the six weeks off before the tournament to spend "a lot of time in the gym and trying to get stronger" as well as indulge in hobbies like free-diving and spearfishing.

He added: "Last year, towards



the end of the season, I got really tired because I didn't expect to play that much golf and I didn't train for it.

"Now, I feel like my legs are where they need to be. That's why I've been so diligent about train-

ing. But there are days when I just don't practise and I don't train.

"That's probably been one of the lessons I've learnt through all of this is there are days where I just have to shut it down, and just not do anything and just relax." NYT

Tiger Woods hitting out of a bunker on the sixth hole during the first round of the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines' South Course on Thursday. The former world No. 1 shot a two-under 70. PHOTO: REUTERS

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS				
Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Sat, 26 Jan 2019				
A League	Wellington	Melbourne City	2.35pm	LW
A League	Melbourne Vict	Sydney FC	4.50pm	LW
Spanish League	Sevilla	Levante	8.00pm	LW
English Cup	Accrington	Derby	8.30pm	LW
Italian League	Sassuolo	Cagliari	10.00pm	LW
German League	Dortmund	Hannover	10.30pm	LW
English Cup	Shrewsbury	Wolverhampton	11.00pm	LW
English Cup	Newcastle	Watford	11.00pm	LW
English Cup	Manchester City	Burnley	11.00pm	LW
Spanish League	Atletico Madrid	Getafe	11.15pm	LW
Sun, 27 Jan 2019				
Italian League	Sampdoria	Udinese	1.00am	LW
English Cup	Millwall	Everton	1.30am	LW
German League	Werder Bremen	E Frankfurt	1.30am	LW
Spanish League	Leganes	Eibar	1.30am	LW
Dutch League	PSV	Groningen	2.45am	LW
Italian League	Milan	Napoli	3.30am	LW
English Cup	AFC Wimbledon	West Ham	3.45am	LW
Spanish League	Valencia	Villarreal	3.45am	LW

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LOTTERY	
TOTO	Thu, 24 Jan 2019 Draw No. 3443/2019
Group 1 Prize: \$1,177,344	No Winner
Draw No. 3444/2019	Group 1 Prize \$2,400,000 est.
Next Draw Mon, 28 Jan 2019 6.30pm	
Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994	

No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.

LW: LiveWire (MBS) & LiveWire (RWS) (21 years and above)
LiveWire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during "Live" telecast)
SB: SportsBuzzerCard (21 years and above)

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Next 48 Hours

TODAY

BASKETBALL

ABL CLS Knights v Zhuhai Wolf Warriors (StarHub Ch202, 8pm).

FOOTBALL

English FA Cup 4th round: Man City v Burnley (10.55pm), Millwall v Everton (tomorrow, 1.25am), Wimbledon v West Ham (tomorrow, 3.40am) – Singtel TV Ch111.
Spanish LaLiga Sevilla v Levante (7.55pm), Atletico v Getafe (11.10pm), Leganes v Eibar (tomorrow, 1.25am), Valencia v Villarreal (tomorrow, 3.40am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

European Tour Desert Classic: Day 3 (StarHub Ch204, 4.30pm).

RUGBY

World Rugby Sevens Series Hamilton: Matches 9-16 (8.30am), 17-24 (1pm) & 25-36 (tomorrow, 5am) – StarHub Ch202.

TENNIS

Australian Open Day 13 (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 4pm & 6pm).

TOMORROW

BASKETBALL

ABL Singapore Slings v Saigon Heat (4pm), Alab Pilipinas v HK Eastern (8pm) – StarHub Ch202.

FOOTBALL

English FA Cup 4th round: Crystal Palace v Tottenham (11.55pm), Chelsea v Sheffield Wed (Monday, 2am) – Singtel TV Ch111.
Spanish LaLiga Valladolid v Celta (7pm), Girona v Barcelona (11.10pm), Bilbao v Betis (Monday, 1.15am), Espanyol v Real Madrid (Monday, 3.40am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

European Tour Desert Classic: Day 4 (StarHub Ch204, 4.30pm).

RUGBY

World Rugby Sevens Series Hamilton: semi-finals (10.30am) & final (1pm) – StarHub Ch202.

TENNIS

Australian Open Day 14 (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, noon & 4pm).

Live telecast times are subject to change. For latest updates, go to singtelv.com.sg & starhubgo.com or check the on-screen TV guide.

Sunday's Hong Kong (Sha Tin) form analysis

STAY WITH TEAM FORTUNE

RACE 1 (2,000M)

1 Salto Olimpico returns to Class 4 here, having won at his last attempt at the grade in July. He should relish getting up to 2,000m.

2 You Have My Word is coming off a disappointing effort over 1,800m, but his form before that was solid. He deserves respect in this small field.

3 Bring It On won over this course and distance two starts ago and can return to form back up to 2,000m.

7 Le Panache is racing honestly and should be around the mark.

RACE 2 (1,000M)

8 Nice Fandango has won only once over the course and distance but he rarely runs poorly. He should get in front here and should hang around at the finish.

6 Meridian Genius had some support before his debut and he didn't have the best of luck before finishing sixth. With natural improvement, he can finish thereabouts.

1 Lucky Guy has not shown up in three course-and-distance runs. He should be able to shape up in this grade though.

4 King's Trooper can run a bold race on debut.

RACE 3 (1,200M)

1 Regency Legend has looked a star in the making in his two wins in Hong Kong. He now has to carry topweight in Class 2 but looks more

than capable of handling it.

4 New Asia Sunrise meets Regency Legend 12 pounds (5.45kg) better for a four-length defeat last time out. He's small but is one of the most honest horses in town.

5 Star Shine has not raced since winning the final race of the 2017/18 season in July. He has found a suitable race and is a place chance.

8 Magic Legend has no weight and could jump out of the ground at any time.

RACE 4 (1,400M)

4 Adonis produced one of the Class 4 runs of last season over this course and distance when he flew home after bombing the start hopelessly. His fourth that day suggested that a win is possible.

2 Diamond Legend has finished second in his last two starts. He doesn't win out of turn but should be around the mark again.

9 Flying Noble improved with a step-up in trip last time out. He has won over this course and distance before and deserves respect.

11 Fortune Way can get a placing if he can overcome a wide draw.

RACE 5 (1,200M)

1 Dashing Gainer has finished in the placings in four of his six course-and-distance starts. Perhaps it just all comes together here for him to finally score a first Hong

Kong victory in this spot.

9 Startling Power dumped Keith Yeung soon after the start in his last run. He had run well in two starts before that. Respect.

3 Noble De Love heads to the dirt for the first time. He's coming off two nice runs on the turf and is not without claims.

11 Deal Maker can run well again.

RACE 6 (1,200M)

3 Team Fortune has had limited luck on this surface in his last couple of starts. If he can get the splits at the right time, he's capable of winning here.

4 Happy Tour took to the surface with aplomb last time out, winning by five lengths over this course and distance. He steps up to Class 3 now but is still a threat.

11 Double Valentine moves across to the dirt for the first time. He has a bad draw but can get into the finish.

12 Goldie Flanker has a blistering turn of foot on his day. He needs a race run to suit but can rattle home strongly with even luck.

RACE 7 (1,800M)

1 Time Warp can run twice over the Sha Tin 1,800m for a second in the 2017 Ladies' Purse, when leading everywhere bar the last stride in what was a course record for Nassa, and a win in that same race in 2018. He is one-dimensional in that he does



Team Fortune (jockey in red cap) should take tomorrow's Race 6 at Sha Tin if he can get the splits at the right time. PHOTO: HKJC

have to lead. He's worth a play.

4 Singapore Sling won the Hong Kong Classic Cup at his sole course-and-distance outing last February. This trip looks more suitable.

3 Glorious Forever is likely to go off as favourite as he returns for the first time since his Hong Kong Cup victory. He's going to be hard to run down by any measure.

5 Pingwu Spark finally steps up beyond a mile for the first time. He has a pedigree that suggests this trip should suit.

RACE 8 (1,600M)

5 Superich has gone close without winning in his last three starts. He should relish the step-up to 1,600m.

1 Dark Dream is likely to jump favourite, having proved simply spectacular in his last run over 2,000m. He is the class factor in this race and gets in nicely at set weights.

4 Harmony Victory finished fifth to Dark Dream last time out. He's a horse that needs to be ridden quick

eter to have any chance of success. That said, gate 13 should give them that opportunity.

14 Green Luck is the lowest-rated horse in the race but he's got talent. He might be the lively outsider.

RACE 9 (1,200M)

14 Aerohappiness had issues after producing a poor run last time out. Having had a bit of time on the sidelines might have proved a blessing in disguise and he might be ready to continue his climb up the ratings ladder now.

13 Shimmer And Shine missed his intended first outing for trainer Caspar Fownes due to injury. He has trialled well and shapes as the main danger.

12 Grade One is racing well and can't be overlooked.

11 Midnight Rattler can run another bold race back up in grade with no weight on his back.

RACE 10 (1,400M)

14 Lakeshore Eagle won well on debut, but it was his second start that was perhaps more impressive. Coming from near the tail, he flashed home to just be beaten a short head by Full Of Beauty, who subsequently franked the form with a strong winning effort last weekend.

8 Loving A Boom has steadily improved with every start. He should relish the 1,400m trip.

7 Speedy Luck won his last three starts in the UK pre-import. He has trialled well enough and bears close watching here.

10 Perfect Match has won his last three starts, including the Griffin Trophy as 1.3 favourite. He steps out of restricted company now and is probably better watching in here.

• Comments courtesy of The Hong Kong Jockey Club

SUNDAY'S HONG KONG (SHA TIN) RACE CARD

RACE 1 TIME :1:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	SALTO OLIMPICO	D J HALL	K C LEUNG	133	2
2	YOU HAVE MY WORD	T P YUNG	S DE SOUSA	133	5
3	BRING IT ON	CH YIP	H BOWMAN	132	1
4	GOOD DAYS	C S SHUM	P C BOUDOT	126	8
5	TAI SMART	F LOR	C YHO	126	6
6	AMAZING AGILITY	LHO	J MOREIRA	124	4
7	LE PANACHE	WY SO	D WHITE	119	9
8	ROMANTIC JOURNEY	C W CHANG	K TEE TAN	114	1

RACE 2 TIME :1:30

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LUCKY GUY	CH YIP	H BOWMAN	128	1
2	SOCCER MASTER	D E FERRARIS	H TMO	127	6
3	AUTHENTIC CHAMP	K HTING	M CHADWICK	125	12
4	KING'S TROOPER	P F YIU	N C LALLAN	125	12
5	LITTLE GENERAL	C S SHUM	P C BOUDOT	125	11
6	MERIDIAN GENIUS	A T MILLARD	K TEE TAN	125	14
7	WINNER SUPREME	Y S TSUI	A SANNA	125	9
8	NICE FANDANGO	C FOWNES	Z PURTON	124	7
9	THIS IS CLASS	K W LUI	M LEUNG	124	2
10	KING'S HEROSIM	C YHO	L23	10	
11	SUNNY DRAGON	R GIBSON	H N WONG	123	4
12	WAYFOONG CHARMER	P O SULLIVAN	K C LEUNG	121	3
13	TEST THE STARS	D J HALL	C SCHOFIELD	119	13
14	BULLISH BROTHER	A S CRUZ	C YHO	118	5

RACE 3 TIME :2:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	REGENCY LEGEND	C S SHUM	Z PURTON	133	1
2	CALIFORNIA FORTUNE	A S CRUZ	A SANNA	131	6
3	GILLY WARRIOR	C YHO	L23	10	3
4	NEW ASIA SUNRISE	Y S TSUI	URISPOLI	127	4
5	STAR SHINE	K W LUI	D WHITE	127	7
6	RAGING BLITZKRIEG	J SIZJE	J MOREIRA	124	2

CLASS 4 TURF - 2000m Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	513X Choccolate	600	11	1	
2	141x2 Terra Reign	570	8	1	
3	9471 Undaconf	570	8	1	
4	205X Darbies Blugit	555	4	1	
5	7145 Follage	555	13	1	
6	1173X Hoges	555	13	1	
7	133X Snitzagiti	545	2	1	

CLASS 4 TURF - 1000m Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LUCKY GUY	CH YIP	H BOWMAN	128	1
2	SOCCER MASTER	D E FERRARIS	H TMO	127	6
3	AUTHENTIC CHAMP	K HTING	M CHADWICK	125	12
4	KING'S TROOPER	P F YIU	N C LALLAN	125	12
5	LITTLE GENERAL	C S SHUM	P C BOUDOT	125	11
6	MERIDIAN GENIUS	A T MILLARD	K TEE TAN	125	14
7	WINNER SUPREME	Y S TSUI	A SANNA	125	9
8	NICE FANDANGO	C FOWNES	Z PURTON	124	7
9	THIS IS CLASS	K W LUI	M LEUNG	124	2
10	KING'S HEROSIM	C YHO	L23	10	
11	SUNNY DRAGON	R GIBSON	H N WONG	123	4
12	WAYFOONG CHARMER	P O SULLIVAN	K C LEUNG	121	3
13	TEST THE STARS	D J HALL	C SCHOFIELD	119	13
14	BULLISH BROTHER	A S CRUZ	C YHO	118	5

CLASS 2 TURF - 1200m Stakes: HK\$1,950,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	REGENCY LEGEND	C S SHUM	Z PURTON	133	1
2	CALIFORNIA FORTUNE	A S CRUZ	A SANNA	131	6
3	GILLY WARRIOR	C YHO	L23	10	3
4	NEW ASIA SUNRISE	Y S TSUI	URISPOLI	127	4
5	STAR SHINE	K W LUI	D WHITE	127	7
6	RAGING BLITZKRIEG	J SIZJE	J MOREIRA	124	2

RACE 4 TIME :2:30

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	DARING HEART	D E FERRARIS	M CHADWICK	132	3
2	DIAMOND LEGEND	A S CRUZ	K TEE TAN	132	9
3	INVESTOR BOOM	J MOREIRA	A SANNA	131	11
4	DIAMOND LEGEND	LHO	N C LALLAN	130	2
5	DISTRICT EXPRESS	P F YIU	C YHO	130	2
6	MONEY WINNER	Y S TSUI	S DE SOUSA	130	12
7	RUN MOON	Z PURTON	H BOWMAN	130	10
8	SHINING BRIGHT	C W CHANG	C MURRAY	130	8
9	FLYING NOBLE	CH YIP	K C LEUNG	129	7
10	NEVER BETTER	P O SULLIVAN	J MOREIRA	128	14
11	FORTUNE WAY	C SCHOFIELD	D WHITE	122	13
12	CASH COURIER	D J HALL	T HSO	119	4
13	RUMINAIRE	R GIBSON	A ABDEL	118	1
14	SURE SUPREME	WY SO	M LEUNG	117	6

RACE 5 TIME :3:00

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	DASHING GAINER	Y S TSUI	S DE SOUSA	133	10
2	MICKEY RICH	P F YIU	N C LALLAN	132	6
3	NOBLE DE LOVE	F LOR	Z PURTON	129	9
4	HAPPY HAPPY STAR	D WHITE	D WHITE	128	4
5	JOY MASTER	C MURRAY	J MOREIRA	128	8
6	TRIUMPHANT LORD	C S SHUM	G VAN NIEKERK	126	12
7	DIONYSUS COLLIN	K W LUI	K C LEUNG	124	11
8	DRAGON	D E FERRARIS	R GIBSON	123	1
9	STARTLING POWER	C W CHANG	M LEUNG	123	5
10	NICE KICK	J SIZJE	J MOREIRA	119	3
11	DEAL MAKER	T P YUNG	M CHADWICK	118	1
12	FAME AND FORTUNE	D J HALL	C YHO	118	2

CLASS 5 TURF - 1400m Stakes: HK\$5690,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	DARING HEART	D E FERRARIS	M CHADWICK	132	3
2	DIAMOND LEGEND	A S CRUZ	K TEE TAN	132	9
3	INVESTOR BOOM	J MOREIRA	A SANNA	131	11
4	DIAMOND LEGEND	LHO	N C LALLAN	130	2
5	DISTRICT EXPRESS	P F YIU	C YHO	130	2
6	MONEY WINNER	Y S TSUI	S DE SOUSA	130	12
7	RUN MOON	Z PURTON	H BOWMAN	130	10
8	SHINING BRIGHT	C W CHANG	C MURRAY	130	8
9	FLYING NOBLE	CH YIP	K C LEUNG	129	7
10	NEVER BETTER	P O SULLIVAN	J MOREIRA	128	14
11	FORTUNE WAY	C SCHOFIELD	D WHITE	122	13
12	CASH COURIER	D J HALL	T HSO	119	4
13	RUMINAIRE	R GIBSON	A ABDEL	118	1
14	SURE SUPREME	WY SO	M LEUNG	117	6

CLASS 4 AWT - 1200m Stakes: HK\$920,000

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	DASHING GAINER	Y S TSUI	S DE SOUSA	133	10
2	MICKEY RICH	P F YIU	N C LALLAN	132	6
3	NOBLE DE LOVE	F LOR	Z PURTON	129	9
4	HAPPY HAPPY STAR	D WHITE	D WHITE	128	4
5	JOY MASTER	C MURRAY	J MOREIRA	128	8
6	TRIUMPHANT LORD	C S SHUM	G VAN NIEKERK	126	12
7	DIONYSUS COLLIN	K W LUI	K C LEUNG	124	11
8	DRAGON	D E FERRARIS	R GIBSON	123	1
9	STARTLING POWER	C W CHANG	M LEUNG	123	5
10	NICE KICK	J SIZJE	J MOREIRA	119	3
11	DEAL MAKER	T P YUNG	M CHADWICK	118	1
12	FAME AND FORTUNE	D J HALL	C YHO	118	2

RACE 6 TIME :3:35

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	LONE EAGLE	A T MILLARD	G VAN NIEKERK	133	4
2	EAGLE	P F YIU	C YHO	126	11
3	TEAM FORTUNE	WY SO	D WHITE	126	5
4	HAPPY TOUR	C S SHUM	Z PURTON	125	3
5	JOYFUL MOMENTS	R GIBSON	C WONG	125	8
6	GOD OF DRAGON	D E FERRARIS	N C LALLAN	121	1
7	GAMER LAYER EMPEROR	F LOR	C YHO	119	9
8	WINNING SUPREME	Y S TSUI	URISPOLI	119	10
9	ELITE BOY	K HTING	H N WONG	118	2
10	GOKO	W M LAI	L23	10	
11	DOUBLE VALENTINE	A S CRUZ	K TEE TAN	116	12
12	GOLDIE FLANKER	P O SULLIVAN	H TMO	116	6

RACE 7 TIME :4:05

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey	wt(lb)	Bar
1	TIME WARP	A S CRUZ	C YHO	133	3
2	GLORIOUS FOREVER	F LOR	S DE SOUSA	131	5
3	GLORIOUS FOREVER	F LOR	S DE SOUSA	131	5
4	SINGAPORE SLING	A T MILLARD	K TEE TAN	124	9
5	PINGWU SPARK	T P YUNG	K C LEUNG	122	8
6	ROMANTIC TOUCH	A S CRUZ	J MOREIRA	114	2
7	INSAYSHABLE	J SIZJE	J MOREIRA	113	1
8	HORSE OF FORTUNE	CH YIP	W M LAI	113	7
9	DINOZZO	J SIZJE	H N WONG	113	4

RACE 8 TIME :4:35

No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	DARK DREAM	F CLOR	S DE SOUSA
2	EASY GO EASY WIN	J MOORE	C DE SOUSA
3	FUORE	F CLOR	H DE SOUSA
4	HARMONY VICTORY	C S SHUM	A DE SOUSA
5	SUPERICH	F CLOR	Z DE SOUSA
6	MR SO AND SO	J SIZE	J DE SOUSA
7	KA YING STAR	A S CRUZ	C DE SOUSA

JOHN GETS BACK ON BOARD

Dragon's Gentlemen Agreement provides comeback jockey with his first winner in 2019

Tan Thean Loon

It was a gentleman, or rather gentleman, agreement that was duly honoured and brought the smiles to comeback jockey John Sundradas last night.

Before the leg-up, Kranji's woman trainer Leticia Dragon had told S John — his common name in the local racing circuit — that her horse, the aptly named Gentlemen Agreement, would provide him with his first winner.

After all, her four-year-old New Zealand-bred had improving form from three starts, culminating with a pleasing third in a Novice event over 1,200m on Jan 13. Furthermore, the horse was handicapped bottomweight at 50kg.

Although John, 39, did not perform badly with 13 winners at

Kranji in 2017, he was one of several jockeys not granted a licence by the Singapore Turf Club for 2018. But, this year, he secured a half-year licence to ride — from Jan 1 to June 30 — and was thankful with the strong support from Dragon.

John settled Gentlemen Agreement nice and relaxed in midfield early, as last-start winner Hero Star, Smooth Operator, Great Seven and trial winner Plato disputed the early lead.

At the 1,000m mark, Hero Star and Smooth Operator pulled ahead by almost a couple of lengths from Great Seven and Plato. Another gap away came the favourite Super Dynasty. John sat pretty on Gentlemen Agreement on his outside.

Hero Star left Smooth Operator to be the lonely leader at the 800m mark. Great Seven closed in second. The grey Super Dynasty



moved up third nicely on the rails. John was still contented to be where he was.

Hero King was hounded by Great Seven going into the straight. Super Dynasty continued to improve. By now, Gentlemen Agreement came into the picture, albeit the widest.

Great Seven drew alongside the leader in the final 200m. Super Dynasty and Gentlemen Agreement also charged up. With the momentum on his side, Gentlemen Agreement got up to win the \$50,000 Class 4 Div I event over 1,400m by a neck. Super Dynasty headed out Great Seven for second, with another neck to Hero Star. The race finish was that close.

"I've been waiting for this moment for a very long time. Everything has come very good and I am very happy for the connections and for Leticia. She supported me very

well and I am very happy for her," said John.

"She prepared the horse very well and she kept telling me this will be your first winner today. So I just followed the instructions and rode my best.

"When he saw daylight, he wanted to take off, especially jumping from 1,200m to 1,400m. He doesn't know where he was running, so I just switched him back a bit and he relaxed. He then travelled very well for me all the way, really strong. In the straight, he just did his best."

Gentlemen Agreement, who paid \$20 for a win, was John's 14th ride this year. Before last night, his best efforts were a second and two thirds. His last winner was Ocean General on Nov 19, 2017.

loon@sph.com.sg

Gentlemen Agreement (No. 11) giving jockey S John his comeback victory in Race 3 at Kranji last night.

ST PHOTO:

DAVE LIM

WEI JING

Friday's South Africa results

RACE 1

1st 5 Hooves Of Troy (\$15-\$7)

2nd 4 Foreign Source (\$11)

3rd 7 Sir Caleb (\$12)

4th 6 Marcellin

Forecast \$35 **Place Forecast** (4-5) \$8, (5-7) \$10, (4-7) \$33 **Tierce** \$612 **Trio** \$212 **Quartet** No winner (\$476 carried forward)

RACE 2

1st 1 Green Lantern (\$8-\$6)

2nd 5 Valentine's Girl (\$27)

3rd 3 Prospect Strike No 3rd dividend

4th 2 Lord Marshal

Forecast \$16 **Place Forecast** (Refund) **Tierce** \$104 **Trio** \$27 **Quartet** \$324 **Scratching:** 7 Twice A Poet

RACE 3

1st 6 Elegant Eva (\$23-\$6)

2nd 3 Great Sound (\$20)

3rd 10 Ginger Rock (\$29)

4th 1 Eternal Night

Forecast \$46 **Place Forecast** (3-6) \$14, (6-10) \$50, (3-10) \$75 **Tierce** \$2,007 **Trio** \$574 **Quartet** No winner (\$212 carried forward)

RACE 4

1st 1 Harington Port (\$11-\$7)

2nd 7 Dettie (\$11)

3rd 2 Conquering King (\$8)

4th 5 Ohsobright

Forecast \$17 **Place Forecast** (1-7) \$7, (1-2) \$4, (2-7) \$10 **Tierce** \$57 **Trio** \$16 **Quartet** \$252

RACE 5

1st 10 San's Dancer (\$96-\$22)

2nd 3 Angel Of Athens (\$16)

3rd 1 Gitango Tonight (\$11)

4th 8 Just Call Me Angel

Forecast \$199 **Place Forecast** (3-10) \$104, (1-10) \$52, (1-3) \$29 **Tierce** No winner (\$4,166 carried forward) **Trio** \$240 **Quartet** No winner (\$270 carried forward)

Races 6 and 7 results not available at press time. Log on to www.singaporepools.com.sg for results

FRIDAY'S SINGAPORE (LONG COURSE E/POLYTRACK) RESULTS

RACE 1

1 **MAN OF WORDS** 59 (11-510)
2 **THOTH WARRIOR** 58.5c 57.5 (34-13)
3 **SPOKESMAN** 58 (53-18)
4 **PRINCE FERDINAND** 59 (45-12)
5 **BRING ME JOY** 55.5 (57-17)
6 **MAKE A FOAMOUS** 57.5c 56.5 (110-29)
7 **CASSIS D'ORANGE** 54.5 (40-11)
8 **GOLDEN ROOSTER** 57.5 (36-12)
9 **MAKE A FOAMOUS** 57.5c 56.5 (110-29)
10 **CASSIS D'ORANGE** 54.5 (40-11)
11 **RELIC WARRIOR** 57.5c 56.5 (485-73)
12 **SUN EMPIRE** 54 (307-60)

Winning stable: Synthetic. Trainer: KY Young. Time: 1min 00.81sec (Going: good). Forecast: \$13. Tierce: \$189. Quartet: \$1808. P Forecast: \$5 (1-4), \$28 (4-3), \$13 (1-3). Trio: \$49.

RACE 2

1 **LIM'S PRIDE** 58c 57 (16-7)
2 **BASILISK** 58 (22-9)
3 **NOVA CLASSIC** 56.5c 55.5 (22-7)
4 **DYNAMIC GENERAL** 56.5c 55.5 (45-10)
5 **CLOUDBURST** 58c 56 (184-49)
6 **JOYOUS** 55.5c 54 (55-17)
7 **GOONFELLA** 56.5 (134-30)
8 **HOOGE NET** 58c 57 (110-26)
9 **FIRST LIGHT** 56.5 (81-23)
10 **SUN AREAS** 58 (49-17)
11 **SILENT BOSS** 55.5c 55.5 (257-53)
12 **DAYVAN** 58 (791-173)

Winning stable: Lim's. Trainer: S Burridge. Time: 1min 23.11sec (good). Forecast: \$13. Tierce: \$131. Quartet: \$531. P Forecast: \$7 (2-3), \$12 (3-10), \$7 (2-10). Trio: \$42. Course scratchings: 13 Optimum Star 14 Million Round

RACE 3

1 **GENTLEMEN AGREEMENT** 50c 51.5 (20-7)
2 **SUPER DYNASTY** 57.5 (17-9)
3 **GREAT SEVEN** 55 (116-26)
4 **HERO STAR** 55.5 (107-29)
5 **STORM TROOPER** 55.5 (42-15)
6 **PLATO** 55.5c 54.5 (46-14)
7 **STREETWISE** 53.5 (46-12)

C\$1000m

1 **I Saifudin** (1) 3 1 1 (479) -
2 **See** (3) 6 2 (483) 1.25
3 **V Duric** (2) 10 2 3 (490) 0.75
4 **S John** (6) 12 11 4 (467) 0.75
5 **G Boss** (7) 7 8 5 (476) 1.25
6 **M Ewe** (9) 1 4 6 (493) 0.5
7 **D Moor** (10) 5 5 8 (487) Hd
8 **CS Chin** (11) 6 9 9 (506) 3.75
9 **KA'issisuhairi** (12) 8 12 10 (497) Nk
10 **TH Koh** (5) 11 10 11 (493) 6.25
11 **N Juglal** (8) 2 7 12 (507) Dist

KS-D (LC) 1400m

1 **T See** (4) 5 5 1 (473) -
2 **B Vorster** (3) 2 2 3 (493) 4.25
3 **M Ewe** (3) 2 2 3 (493) 4.25
4 **AK Lim** (10) 6 8 4 (465) Shd
5 **S Noh** (11) 9 9 5 (489) Nk
6 **TH Koh** (2) 1 1 6 (465) 1
7 **N Juglal** (4) 22 10 7 (537) 1.25
8 **Zzuriman** (9) 11 10 8 (459) 1.25
9 **V Duric** (7) 3 3 9 (527) 2.25
10 **S Noh** (6) 4 4 10 (519) Ns
11 **CC Wong** (12) 12 11 4 (520) Nk
12 **I Saifudin** (1) 10 11 12 (514) 2.25

3 **ANGEL HALO** 56 (92-19)
4 **SMOOTH OPERATOR** 57 (26-7)
5 **KHODAWAND** 55c 53 (300-57)
6 **HORSE KING** 55 (254-65)
7 **WARRIOR** 55 (254-65)
8 **ANGEL HALO** 56 (92-19)
9 **SMOOTH OPERATOR** 57 (26-7)
10 **KHODAWAND** 55c 53 (300-57)
11 **HORSE KING** 55 (254-65)
12 **WARRIOR** 55 (254-65)

Winning stable: SMR. Trainer: L Dragon. Time: 1min 23.79sec (good). Forecast: \$14. Tierce: \$340. Quartet: \$3717. P Forecast: \$6 (1-1), \$18 (1-7), \$23 (11-7). Trio: \$56.

RACE 4

5 **HIGH LIMIT** 52 (14-510)
1 **ASHBAH** 53.5 (34-12)
2 **CORSA D'AVOR** 52c 56 (43-17)
3 **ELENA D'AVOR** 52c 53.5 (26-12)
4 **ROUGHEAD** 51.5 (82-18)
5 **MOOT CHOISY** 50.5c 51 (29-15)
6 **SHENBAO** 50 (519-7)
7 **SILENT BOSS** 55.5c 55.5 (257-53)
8 **LUCY RED** 50c 50.5 (47-26)
9 **METAGROSS** 55 (38-8)

Winning stable: Fortune No 2. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 13.16sec (good). Forecast: \$23. Tierce: \$368. Quartet: \$1059. P Forecast: \$8 (5-3), \$25 (3-1), \$22 (5-1). Trio: \$81.

RACE 5

5 **HELIOSPHERE** 56.5 (9-510)
6 **STAR JACK** 58 (32-8)
7 **AUGUSTUS** 56.5 (28-10)
8 **PR DUJARDIN** 56.5 (90-23)
9 **MAEEM** 55 (83-22)
10 **ZEEM** 55 (83-22)
11 **CLASSIFIED** 56.5c 53.5 (261-54)
12 **LIM'S PRIDE** 58c 57 (16-7)
13 **STORM TROOPER** 55.5 (42-15)
14 **DAYVAN** 58 (791-173)

Winning stable: China Horse Club. Trainer: D Freedman. Time: 1min 35.20sec (good). Forecast: \$26. Tierce: \$112. Quartet: \$3372. P Forecast: \$14 (5-4), \$18 (4-2), \$7 (5-2). Trio: \$39.

RACE 6

8 **BERLINETTA** 52.5c 51.5 (78-17)
9 **POWERFUL AS WIND** 53 (32-11)

M Lerner

1 **N Juglal** (11) 3 5 9 (491) 0.75
2 **S Shafrizal** (8) 8 8 10 (481) 0.75
3 **I Saifudin** (5) 5 3 1 (476) 2

MS 1200m

1 **I Saifudin** (3) 2 2 1 (492) -
2 **B Thompson** (6) 1 1 2 (467) Hd
3 **WS Chan** (5) 3 4 3 (431) 2
4 **G Boss** (1) 5 3 1 (472) Shd
5 **S John** (8) 9 7 5 (503) Nk
6 **B Vorster** (2) 6 5 6 (457) 1
7 **CC Wong** (4) 7 9 7 (467) 1.25
8 **S Noh** (11) 5 6 8 (488) Nk
9 **N Juglal** (7) 4 6 9 (460) 7.25
10 **V Duric** (10) 10 10 10 (518) 14.25

KS-C (LC) 1600m

1 **D Moor** (5) 1 1 1 (503) -
2 **B Thompson** (6) 1 1 2 (467) Hd
3 **M Lerner** (2) 4 3 3 (486) 0.5
4 **G Boss** (4) 6 5 4 (501) 2.5
5 **M Kellyard** (11) 11 11 5 (482) Hd
6 **M Radd** (8) 10 6 (453) 0.5
7 **CC Wong** (10) 7 7 7 (453) 0.5
8 **Nyurul** (1) 3 4 8 (533) 3.5
9 **T See** (3) 9 9 9 (545) 0.75
10 **TH Koh** (12) 8 10 10 (500) 0.5
11 **S Noh** (11) 5 6 8 (488) Nk
12 **Mzaki** (7) 12 12 12 (488) 3.75

C\$1600m

1 **CC Wong** (4) 1 1 1 (497) Nk
2 **B Thompson** (6) 3 2 2 (438) Nk

10 **ZAHIR** 50.5c 51 (43-12)
11 **MUSCLE BEACH** 59 (22-7)
12 **VENUS DE MILO** 57.5 (31-10)
13 **WHIZZY WALTZY** 58.5c 57.5 (38-8)
14 **WALTERS BAY** 50c 51.5 (56-13)
15 **MILITARY ALLIANCE** 54.5c 53.5 (76-19)
16 **SPUR MEON** 59c 57 (50-15)

Winning stable: Siang Ho. Trainer: KY Young. Time: 1min 41.67sec (good). Forecast: \$96. Tierce: \$1659. Quartet: No winner (\$3284 jackpot carried forward to next race). P Forecast: \$24 (9-8), \$32 (8-10), \$36 (9-10). Trio: \$285. Course scratchings: 4 Avengers Hero 5 Sugartime Jazz

RACE 7

7 **ROBIN HOOD** 53.5c 54 (63-19)
8 **PAPARAZZI** 53c 52 (14-510)
9 **SARAB** 56c 53 (140-32)
10 **CHALAZA** 51.5 (156-37)
11 **AUTUMN RUSH** 57c 56 (92-24)
12 **GOIAZO** 51 (160-37)
13 **TWICKENHAM** 56 (113-26)
14 **GUILTY PLEASURES** 52.5 (93-25)
15 **LIONROCKSPIRIT** 53.5 (41-14)
16 **SIR ISAAC** 52c 52c 50 (45-14)

Winning stable: Fight Eight One. Trainer: HW Tan. Time: 1min 22.81sec (good). Forecast: \$40. Tierce: \$3309. Quartet: \$14634. P Forecast: \$14 (7-8), \$37 (8-2), \$63 (7-2). Trio: \$165. Course scratchings: 13 Murrefield

RACE 8

6 **SATELLITE WARRIOR** 55.5c 54.5 (80-19)
7 **WHIZZY WALTZY** 58.5c 57.5 (38-8)
8 **VENUS DE MILO** 57.5 (31-10)
9 **WHIZZY WALTZY** 58.5c 57.5 (38-8)
10 **CHALAZA** 51.5 (156-37)
11 **AUTUMN RUSH** 57c 56 (92-24)
12 **GOIAZO** 51 (160-37)
13 **TWICKENHAM** 56 (113-26)
14 **GUILTY PLEASURES** 52.5 (93-25)
15 **LIONROCKSPIRIT** 53.5 (41-14)
16 **SIR ISAAC** 52c 52c 50 (45-14)

Winning stable: Champion. Trainer: J O'Hara. Time: 1min 23.39sec (good). Forecast: \$120. Tierce: \$675. Quartet: \$4329. P Forecast: \$28 (6-1), \$5 (1-3), \$18 (6-3). Trio: \$54. Course scratchings: 5 Per Impower 8 Gratus 9 Nadeem Sapphire

26-01-19 SATURDAY - KOREA RACE CARD

KOREA FEED: SEOUL (#OTH1)

Race 1 12:45PM (#40,000,000) **SEOL-1300m**
1 0899 Gold Pettit 55.0 [1] A H Lee 5.3% J Y Cheol 5.9%
2 x81x Amazing Soul 55.0 [2] A Davielson 12.5% L G Ho 12.5%
3 Jeok Gwang 55.0 [3] H J Jun 6.1% K D Kyun 9.4%
4 0232 Phoenix Wolf 53.5 [4] L D Ha 7.6% L B Chun 8.4%
5 2x The Spiker 54.5 [5] Seung-Wan 8.1% Y H Myung 12.3%
6 502 Yaho M J Cat 54.0 [6] L G Won 13.6% P J Woo 14.3%
7 547 Wandering Brush 57.0 [7] D Ha 7.6% K D Chul 7.6%
8 Horse Captain 55.0 [8] D Breux 5.9% Young 10.0%
9 34 Daeji Yeogool 55.0 [9] L H Dong 3.1% C Y Joo 6.7%
10 0312 Phoenix Wolf 53.5 [10] L H Dong 3.1% C Y Joo 6.7%
11 985 Monie Hana 53.0 [11] Seung-Wan 8.1% Y H Myung 12.3%
12 0 Miss Sunshine 53.0 [12] J Victore 9.8% W C Ku 9.1%

Race 2 01:35PM (#60,000,000) **SEOL-1000m**
1 0899 Gold Pettit 55.0 [1] A H Lee 5.3% J Y Cheol 5.9%
2 x81x Amazing Soul 55.0 [2] A Davielson 12.5% L G Ho 12.5%
3 3332 Marmio Anari 54.5 [3] M S Young 20.7% P J Kun 13.6%
4 0232 Phoenix Wolf 53.5 [4] L D Ha 7.6% L B Chun 8.4%
5 2x The Spiker 54.5 [5] Seung-Wan 8.1% Y H Myung 12.3%
6 3x2 Daegun Chan 54.5 [6] K J Jun 9.9% M G Gil 14.6%
7 0 Ooped Boss 52.0 [7] K J Jun 9.9% M G Gil 14.6%
8 0007 Star Platinum 53.0 [8] L C Kyung 8.6% S J Ha 5.0%
9 0007 Cheonan Dong 52.0 [9] K O Sung 3.6% C B Ju 6.9%
10 x88x Star Summit 54.5 [10] D Breux 5.9% Young 10.0%
11 4587 Forever Winner 52.5 [11] P J Jong 9.8% W C Ku 9.1%

KOREA FEED: SEOUL (#OTH1)

Race 3 02:00PM (#60,000,000) **SEOL-1300m**
1 6390 Scarlet Perfect 51.0 [1] Beam-20 6.6% Heung 7.6%
2 0325 Damon Angel 55.0 [2] K D Woo 9.9% C Y Goo 11.6%
3 9674 Smarty Adele 53.5 [3] M S Young 20.7% M G Gil 14.6%
4 5489 Sonogong 54.0 [4] M S Young 20.7% M G Gil 14.6%
5 1 Smile Girl 53.5 [5] Seung-Wan 8.1% Y H Myung 12.3%
6 5389 Namjok Nara 52.0 [6] A H Lee 5.3% J Y Cheol 5.9%
7 9076 Choyun Nia 55.0 [7] J P Soo 2.1% K Chul 7.6%
8 508x Gaja Gaja 53.5 [8] J Victore 9.8% W C Ku 9.1%
9 8412 Daddy Glory 56.0 [9] L Hyeok 8.5% K D Kyun 9.4%
10 8455 Barime Camp 55.0 [10] J J Ro 9.3% B H Jun 9.1%
11 0076 Super Lightning 55.5 [11] H H Hun 4.8% Y B Bok 8.1%
12 0780 Deo Joen Naei 52.0 [12] J J Hee 6.0% J Y Cheol 5.9%

Race 4 02:25PM (#75,000,000) **SEOL-1700m**
1 x76x Bold Shing 52.0 [1] Beam-20 6.6% A B Ki 13.3%
2 1x12 Dae Wan Ma 53.5 [2] A Davielson 12.5% S I Seok 9.7%
3 6022 Marmio Khan 54.0 [3] K D Woo 9.9% C Y Goo 11.6%
4 5489 Sonogong 54.0 [4] M S Young 20.7% M G Gil 14.6%
5 5610 Something Myst 55.0 [5] L Hyeok 8.5% K D Kyun 9.4%
6 5345 Yes You Can 56.0 [6] P T Jong 9.8% W C Ku 9.1%
7 0935 Sayonari Healin 57.0 [7] K O Sung 3.6% C B Ju 6.9%
8 868x Strong Shine 54.0 [8] K J Jun 9.9% M G Gil 14.6%
9 x026 Hibioki 56.0 [9] S H Chul 10.0% Young 10.0%

Race 5 02:50PM (#40,000,000) **SEOL-1700m**
1 x347 Seungri Plus 54.0 [1] K Y Geun 17.2% L G Ho 12.5%

Race 6 03:15PM (#40,000,000) **SEOL-1300m**
1 1 Gaenari Song 53.5 [1] M S Young 20.7% Heung 16.5%
2 1742 Changseong Lu 56.0 [2] A Davielson 12.5% K S Kaun 8.8%
3 0410 Simblyong 53.5 [3] P S Woo 3.1% C S Sik 7.3%
4 134x Mapaeobang 54.5 [4] J P Soo 2.1% K Chul 7.6%
5 9512 Tap Luck 52.0 [5] Jung-2.0 7.1% B D Sun 9.0%
6 7364x Argo Melody 57.0 [6] K E Soo 4.0% C Y Eae 2.9%
7 9717 Gansel 55.5 [7] L D Ha 7.6% S B Seok 7.5%
8 8700 Kaizen Force 55.0 [8] B C Sik 3.5% P H Jin 3.8%
9 7255 Shadow Money 54.0 [9] M K Yuen 6.

SPORT

NUGGETS LEARN HOW TO WIN ONE STEP AT A TIME

High-flying underdogs on pace to 1st play-offs since 2013 but know they've much to improve

DENVER • The Denver Nuggets' worst loss of the season was less than 48 hours old when Tim Connelly, the team's president of basketball operations, found himself courtside before a National Basketball Association game against the Chicago Bulls, assessing some lessons of the defeat.

"A loss is never a positive," he said. "But we have to be realistic about where we stand. We've done nothing, and that team has done everything several times over."

He was referring to the Golden State Warriors, a superstar team who have demolished their share of opponents in recent years.

But what the Warriors did to the Nuggets one night last week was particularly gruesome, in part because Denver had entered the home game with a slim lead over Golden State in the West.

But then, on Jan 16, the Warriors scored 51 points in the first quarter and sailed to a 142-111 victory that sent a message to everyone on the opposing bench, inside the building and across the league: We are not going anywhere.

It was, for one night at least, illustrative of the gulf that still exists between the two-time defending champions and the rest.

Denver had been hopeful that they were bridging the gap, but they came out of that mauling understanding there was still work to be done.

"We got a little comfortable," for-

ward Paul Millsap said. "It was a humbling experience."

Still, these are heady times for the Nuggets. They are a colourful crew led by Nikola Jokic, a centre from Serbia and former second-round pick who facilitates the offence from the high post. In a league full of chiselled gods, Jokic, 23, has the dimensions of a melting iceberg. But at 2.13m and 113kg, he is a gifted passer and scorer, and he appears bound for his first All-Star Game.

His background – unsung prospect, semi-overlooked – is rep-

resentative of the roster as a whole. Just one player in the team's regular rotation, the 21-year-old point guard Jamal Murray, was a top-10 lottery pick.

"It makes us all dogs," guard Malik Beasley said, "because we've been underrated our whole lives".

Millsap sees similarities between the Nuggets and one of his former teams, the Atlanta Hawks, who despite having little star power still finished with the best record in the East in 2015.

"Ego-less guys," he said. "Guys who don't care about getting the credit. This team is a lot more talented than that team. But that team used every inch of talent and ability to get things done."

The Nuggets are not using every inch of their talent – not yet, anyway. In the jargon of the game, they have untapped potential, and this is understandable.

They are as inexperienced as they are precocious, with seven of their top-11 players 24 or younger.

The West's No. 2 team (31-15) have had moments this term, such as beating the Raptors in Toronto was a big deal, but they are still a work in progress.

But their improvement has been evident; they are on pace to win 56 games and make their first post-season appearance since 2013.

According to coach Michael Malone, the Warriors' rout was just "part of our journey".

He added: "We're a young team that is trying to become a play-off team and, once you become a play-off team, you hope to become a championship team."

"You can't skip steps." NYTIMES

GETTING THERE

We're a young team that is trying to become a play-off team and, once you become a play-off team, you hope to become a championship team. You can't skip steps.



MICHAEL MALONE, Denver Nuggets coach, on how there is a gradual process to achieving success.



Denver's Nikola Jokic trying to stop Donovan Mitchell as the Nuggets lost 114-108 to hosts Utah Jazz on Wednesday to drop to 31-15. The Serbian centre leads the West's second-best team in points, assists and rebounds. PHOTO: REUTERS

Warriors make capital out of their well-rounded game

WASHINGTON • With eight consecutive National Basketball Association (NBA) wins on the spin, the Golden State Warriors probably did not need any additional motivation on their Washington trip.

But Stephen Curry wanted the team to make a pit-stop prior to their game with the Wizards to drop in on Barack Obama, according to ESPN's Ramona Shelburne.

The meeting with the former United States president was brokered by the six-time All-Star, but his intention was for the visit to "stay private, rather than become a political statement".

However, it still went viral when Logan Murdock of the San Jose Mercury News tweeted a photo of the get-together after a security guard had initially posted it on his Insta-

gram page before deleting it.

The Warriors have yet to visit the White House during US President Donald Trump's term to celebrate their 2017 and 2018 titles.

When asked after the 126-118 win over the Wizards, as to how the team came to see Obama, Curry smirked and told the San Francisco Chronicle: "I have no idea."

Draymond Green, who had seven

points and pulled down a game-high 15 rebounds on Thursday, simply told ESPN it was "a private team meeting, team event, it was good".

The West-leading Warriors improved to 34-14 while the Wizards dropped to 20-27 despite narrowing the gap to 108-106 with Curry on the bench in the fourth quarter.

The Warriors were led by Curry, who scored 38 points in topping

the 30-point mark in four of his past six games.

DeMarcus Cousins had a season-best 17 in 24 minutes in his third game since returning from a year-long absence on the sidelines with an Achilles injury.

Kevin Durant delivered 21 points as the Warriors switched gears from their successful three-point attack to an inside game.


Curry sank just two of eight three-point attempts but ended up shooting 12 of 16 inside the arc.

Just one game after tying the NBA record by making his first 10 three-pointers, Klay Thompson went one for four. Curry said teams are starting to adapt their defence to stopping the three-point attack.

"Teams are adjusting," he said. "We still got good looks." REUTERS

Obituaries

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Sundram Letchimi

Age: 68

Passed away peacefully on 24 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Husband: Bathmanathan s/o Munusamy (Ex RSN and Ex CISCO)

Father: Gopal Sundram (old car traders)

Late Mother: Sundram Janaki

Late Father-in-law: Munusamy Thevar

Late Mother-in-law: Sivapakiam

Siblings: S. Balakrishnan (Velu)
S. Jaya (Kandasamy)
S. Gopal
S. Mariammal
S. Kalidas (Raja)
S. Sheelah

Children: B. Pubalan
B. Mahalekshmi
B. Kalidas


Grandchildren: Krishanthini
Prithiviraj
Aruna Pubalan
Veer Kalidas

Siblings-in-law, daughters-in-law, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

She is resting at Block 37 Sin Ming Drive #01-581, Singapore 575711. Tel: 8235 8416 / 9690 9436

Cortege leaves on Saturday 26 January 2019 at 3.00pm for cremation at Mandai Crematorium Hall 1 at 4.15pm.

"The Lord is my light and salvation." Psalm 27:1



Anthony Peter Lopez

Age: 95

Was called home to the Lord on 24 January 2019. Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Brothers/Sisters: Margaret Chowdhurie nee Lopez
Luke Lopez †
Gerard Lopez †
Joseph Simon Lopez †
Theresa Ubaldia Lopez
Carmalita de Luca (Aust)
Simon Lopez

Spouses: Nick Aftab Chowdhurie †
Theresa Lopez †
Theresa Magdelene Lopez
Hector de Luca †
Margaret

Nephews: Francis Chowdhurie, Ridzuan Abd. Chowdhurie and Stanley Allen Chowdhurie

All other nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Notre Dame Room, 50 Ophir Road, Singapore 188690. Wake visiting hours from 11.00am - 10.00pm. Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Monday 28 January 2019 at 9.45am for Funeral Mass at Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, 31 Siglap Hill, Singapore 456085 at 10.30am, thereafter to Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 12.20pm.

The family thanks staff of All Saints Home (Yishun) and doctors and nurses of Khoo Teck Phuat Hospital Wards 78/87 for looking after Tony.

The Family

Jeanette, Paul & Mee Hee, Julia & Sebastian, Lydia & Benedict, Joel & Liyi, Hosea, Dorcas & Eugene, Joseph & Zhen Zhen, Jonathan & Amanda, Joshua & Esther & Elizabeth (Elle), Emma & Matthew, Jamie & Hannah.

Praise & Thank the Lord for the Life, Love, & Legacy of



Rev T.C. Nga 倪天增

Back home in the house of the Lord forever since 19.1.19

We also praise & thank the Lord for all the support & words of encouragement of relatives, co-labourers, & friends ... especially donations towards "TRAC Lease Renewal Fund."

GOD BLESS ALL

The family of the late



Mdm Lee Leong Choo

thanks all relatives and friends for their support during their recent bereavement.

They would also like to thank Professor Woo Keng Thye and all the doctors and nurses of Singapore General Hospital and Renal Health who have looked after her so well for many years.



In memory of a loved one



In memory of a loved one

life

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D3



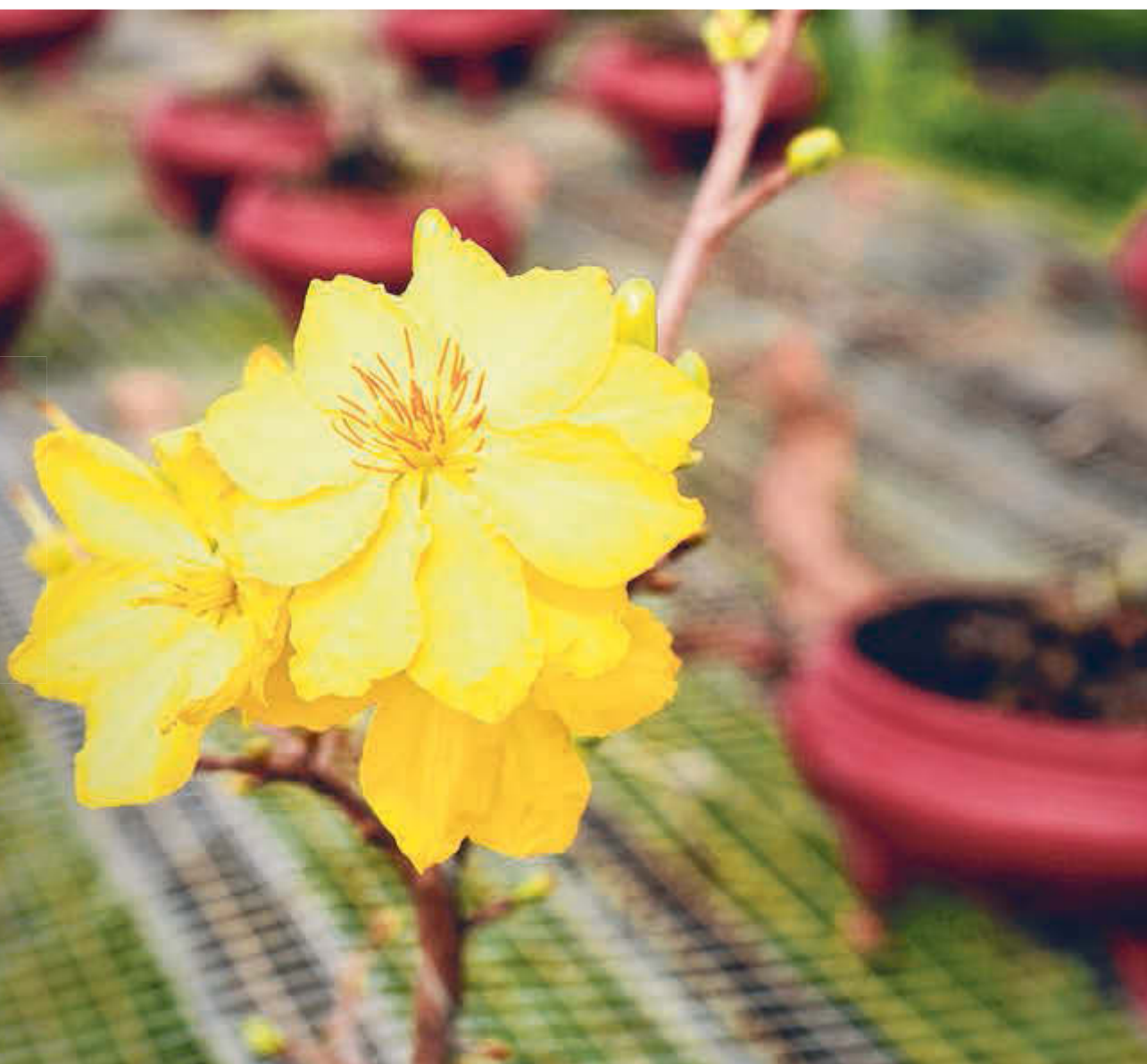
**I hope you live a life
you're proud of,
and if you find that
you're not, I hope you
have the strength
to start over again.**

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Live more.
Bank less.* 

Lasting festive blooms

It's time to spruce up your home with some Chinese New Year plants. Desiree Loh finds out how to make them last. **D2**



DESIGN: SALLY LAM PHOTOS: KELVIN CHNG, KEVIN LIM



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Lucky blooms all year round

Apart from the perennial favourites for Chinese New Year, home owners are opting for non-seasonal plants that can be displayed beyond the holiday

Desiree Loh

Every Chinese New Year, mandarin orange and four season lime trees count among the popular choices for home owners looking for auspicious plants.

But beyond these traditional picks, some are going for non-seasonal plants that will not look out of place beyond the holiday and can be displayed all year round.

Mr P H Toh, owner of wholesaler Toh Floriculture Supplies, said that adeniums are one example.

"Adeniums represent good luck so more customers buy them for Chinese New Year, but they are also popular during other times because

they flower throughout the year and are easy to maintain," said the 57-year-old.

He has sold about 3,000 pots of adeniums to market vendors and florists so far this year.

Orchids are also a popular choice for the new year, said Mr Zhuo Hong Yi, 37, a project manager at orchid nursery Toh Garden.

"Orchids were printed on banknotes back in the day, so orchids signify money to many of our older customers," he added.

Meanwhile, Ban Nee Chen Nursery has brought in pink-hued dwarf jade bonsai for the first time.

"Customers are always on the lookout for something special and the pink is very eye-catching and people are intrigued by that," said the nursery's project manager, Ms Kelly Ng, 27, who adds that the plant has sold out at several outlets.

The Straits Times checks out eight plants that will spruce up your space this Chinese New Year and beyond.

desloh@sph.com.sg



Mr P H Toh, owner of wholesaler Toh Floriculture Supplies, with apricot blossoms.

APRICOT BLOSSOMS

This tropical plant is highly sought after during Chinese New Year as it is believed to usher in luck.

When the signature bright yellow flowers fall off, they resemble gold sprinkled on the ground.

Its Chinese name, man di huang jing, literally translates to gold all over the floor.

Price: From \$28 to \$380

Care: The plant can be kept indoors for up to three weeks during the blooming period and should be watered every day.

Once all the flowers have dropped, place the plant in a sunny area.

After new leaves have sprouted and matured, pluck them off to quicken the flowering process.



DWARF JADE BONSAI

The leaves of the bonsai resemble jade, which is believed to represent good luck.

Price: \$12.50 to \$88

Care: Keep in a sunny and dry environment. Avoid waterlogging the soil. Make sure that excess water can flow out of the pot.

WHERE TO BUY

- **Ban Nee Chen Nursery**, 11 Jurong West Street 93, tel: 9451-9217
- **Far East Flora**, 565 Thomson Road, tel: 6251-2323 or go to www.fareastflora.com
- **Toh Floriculture Supplies**, 90 Jalan Lekar, tel: 6762-4046
- **Toh Garden**, 11 Lorong Pasu, tel: 6763-9186 or go to www.tohgarden.com

PHOTOS: FAR EAST FLORA, KELVIN CHNG, NG SOR LUAN, TOH GARDEN



ADENIUMS

This plant comes in a variety of auspicious bright colours including red and pink.

Known as fu gui hua (wealth plant) in Chinese, it is a popular pick during the festive period because its swollen basal stem represents wealth and fortune.

It is believed that the bigger the basal stem, the more prosperity will be ushered in.

Price: \$28 to \$68

Care: If it is placed in a sunny area, water the plant once a day. If it is in a shaded corridor, water once every two or three days. Avoid over-watering because the roots will rot if the soil is waterlogged.



AZALEAS

These vibrant flowers often bloom simultaneously and this is commonly taken to be a symbol of harmony. They are available in various bright colours, such as striking shades of pink.

Price: From \$12

Care: Keep the plant in semi-shaded areas such as balconies. Water on alternate days and keep the soil moist.



LIMITED-EDITION GOLD SERIES TABLE GARDENS

For those looking for a fuss-free plant that does not take up too much space, Far East Flora has brought back its series of potted prosperity and indoor plants – this time with a festive golden pig nestled among the greens. These coffee-table favourites make for a festive table-top display.

Price: From \$82.90 a pot

Care: There is no need for second guessing when it comes to watering because each pot comes equipped with a water indicator that lets you know when it is time to hydrate the plants. Keep the plant in a shaded area with indirect sunlight.



DENDROBIUM MIX POTS

For those looking for variety, these mix pots come with dendrobiums of assorted colours, including yellow and dark pink. They are a perennial favourite at Toh Garden during the Chinese New Year season, with more than 100 pots sold this year so far.

Price: From \$68 a pot

Care: The orchids can last for up to one month before the flowering process begins again. Keep the plant in a partially shaded area and water thoroughly. It should be fertilised twice a week. Make sure the plant medium is completely dried out before watering again.



KOREAN CYMBIDIUMS

A popular corporate gift, these seasonal orchids are sold only during the Chinese New Year period because they bloom just once a year from November to March. The orchids require a temperate climate to grow and will not flower again in tropical Singapore.

Price: From \$145 a pot

Care: When kept in a cool environment such as an air-conditioned office and watered once every three days, Korean cymbidiums can last up to three months. Without air-conditioning, they last for up to one month. As a rule of thumb, water only when the medium is dry.



BUDDHA'S HAND

For a more quirky choice, get this ornamental citrus plant that bears unusually shaped fruit. The fragrant fruits resemble the hands seen on representations of Buddha, which lends the plant its name. This plant is believed to bring good luck and the orange-coloured fruits add to the festive atmosphere.

Price: \$68

Care: This is an outdoor plant so it requires full sun. Water the plant thoroughly once a day and ensure that the soil is fully drained.

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Let 500 chrysanthemums bloom



Mr Shinichi Suzuki, who is skilled in the Japanese flower cultivation technique of senrinzaki, set up three chrysanthemum arrangements in the Flower Dome at Gardens by the Bay as part of the Dahlia Dreams floral exhibition.

ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

Horticulturist Shinichi Suzuki cultivates the flowers from a single plant stem and arranges the branches in a dome-shaped frame

Michelle Ng

Would you spend 18 months growing a flower that only blooms for one month before it wilts?

Not many people would, but 68-year-old Japanese horticulturist Shinichi Suzuki is one such person who undertakes this painstaking process called senrinzaki.

He cultivates more than 500 chrysanthemum flowers from a single plant stem and arranges the branches in a dome-shaped frame.

When done successfully, all the yellow chrysanthemum flowers bloom in unison.

Senrinzaki, which means a thousand blooms, is a Japanese flower cultivation technique where hundreds of chrysanthemum flowers bloom from a single plant and last

for just a month.

Chrysanthemum is the most commonly used flower for this arrangement, although other plants with soft stems such as poinsettia and cosmos can also be grown using this technique.

"I want to make a masterpiece. If everyone can do it, then it won't be a challenge," says Mr Suzuki, who hails from Nihonmatsu city in Fukushima prefecture in Japan. He spoke to The Straits Times through an interpreter.

Mr Suzuki was in Singapore earlier this month to oversee the setting up of three of his senrinzaki arrangements in the Flower Dome at Gardens by the Bay as part of the Dahlia Dreams floral exhibition.

Each of the arrangement has at least 500 flowers with the largest at 2m wide.

He is one of seven horticulturists in Japan, and possibly the world, who is skilled in senrinzaki.

Ozukuri, the original art form of the dome-shaped floral formation, dates back to the 19th century in Japan and usually consists of 200 to 300 blooms.

Master growers from Nihonmatsu have since refined this technique to produce senrinzaki, which allows for the intricate arrangement of at least 500 flowers and

can go up to over 1,000.

Typically, chrysanthemum flowers in autumn in September and October when days are shorter. Chrysanthemum is a symbol of royalty in the Japanese culture.

To have the flowers bloom out of season in January to coincide with the Dahlia Dreams exhibition is a challenge that Mr Suzuki gamely took up.

Not only are the flowers currently in full bloom, he has cultivated the flowers in a way that a new flower will bloom in place of one that might wilt prematurely.

"If you care for it 100 times, the final results will be 100 times better," he says.

Mr Suzuki has been growing chrysanthemum flowers as a hobby since 1999, as he was planning for his retirement as an engineer.

It took him four to five years to master the senrinzaki technique.

Even then, he has had his fair share of failure over the years as there is no guarantee that the arrangement will flourish each time.

The three senrinzaki displays in the Flower Dome mark the first time his blooms have been displayed outside Japan.

He says he is happy to see the public appreciating his floral arrangements and taking photos of them.

The Dahlia Dreams exhibition, which runs during the Chinese New Year period, showcases a wide variety of dahlias, with some blooms as large as 25cm, set in a scenic landscape with Chinese pavilions, rotating water wheels and a 40m-long archway of red lanterns.

scape with Chinese pavilions, rotating water wheels and a 40m-long archway of red lanterns.

ngmich@sph.com.sg

VIEW IT / DAHLIA DREAMS

WHERE: Flower Dome, Gardens by the Bay, 18 Marina Gardens Drive

WHEN: Till Feb 24, 9am to 9pm

ADMISSION: Singapore residents, \$10.80 for one conservatory and \$18 for two conservatories; foreigners, \$28 for two conservatories

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The home owners' love of koi was part of the inspiration behind the continuous semicircular form of the house. A similar-shaped koi pond wraps around the perimeter of the house, making it appear as if it is floating on water.
PHOTOS: LIM AI TIONG (LATO) ARCHITECTS/DESIGN

TheChicHome

Ahead of the curve

A semicircular house in Serangoon Garden makes the best of a triangular plot without sacrificing on space or views

Lynn Tan

Call it a house with curves to love.

The three-storey semi-detached house in Moreton Close in Serangoon Garden has a semicircular form that takes advantage of the triangular plot without sacrificing on space.

Designed by architect Lim Ai Tiong of home-grown firm Lato Architects/Design, the 6,800 sq ft house replaces a single-storey building that had less space, a dated cottage style and required extensive maintenance.

This may be Mr Lim's first time designing a semicircular house, but the home owners, who are in their 60s, "liked the half-moon form right from the start and did not express any apprehension at all".

He adds: "They specifically liked the shape of the house as well as the koi pond that sweeps around the arc, giving the house a floating appearance."

Nevertheless, an interesting form does not negate the need for practical considerations and programmatic requirements.

To maximise the efficiency of the floorplan, Mr Lim lined up the more enclosed and rectilinear rooms along the party wall facing the concave part of the curve, while keeping the spaces and furniture arrangement along the curve more fluid and open.

The curved wing houses the living and dining rooms, dry and wet kitchens on the first storey, and the

master suite comprising the bedroom, bathroom, walk-in wardrobe and study on the second storey. Given their bigger footprint, it is more logical to place these larger spaces within this wing, which also offers views outside.

Other areas, such as the family room, powder room, maid's room, laundry area and guest suites are in the rectangular wing adjacent to the party wall.

The contrast between the curvilinear and rectilinear forms creates a meaningful dialogue that ties the whole scheme together, but what occupies the space between the two is equally important.

A long corridor separates the wings, with doors at either end to facilitate natural cross-ventilation.

While an incidental space like this one can become a remnant area, Mr Lim saw its potential and designed a statement piece here – a dramatic curved staircase.

Unlike the lower two storeys, the attic is a simple rectangular box.

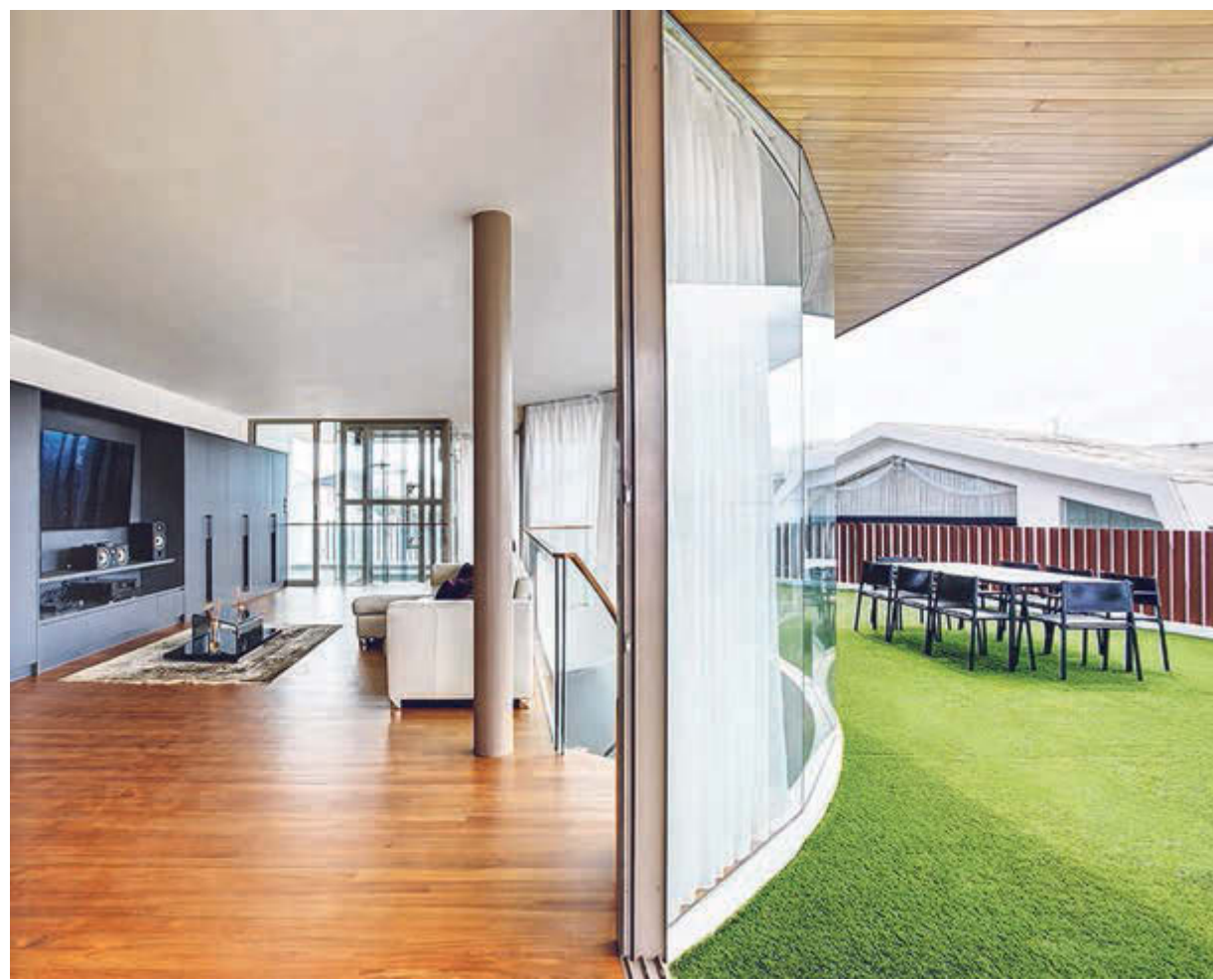
"Initially, I thought I would top off the massing with a third semicircular form, but, after close to 10 study models on the form and composition of the house, I decided that a rectangular volume sitting right up against the party wall seems to complete and balance the whole composition best," said Mr Lim.

After the completion of the \$2-million construction, which took about 15 months, the owners moved into the house in the first quarter of last year.

While it looks nothing like the run-of-the-mill semi-detached home, the form was created to work around the site conditions and not merely as an attempt to create something different for the sake of making an architectural statement.

"Every project has a unique set of parameters arising from the site, orientation and client's brief, which in turn generates a unique design response," says Mr Lim.

stlife@sph.com.sg



Deep eaves shelter the entertainment room housed in the glass attic.



The elegance, lightness and porosity of the curved staircase, constructed of mild steel and with timber veneer cladding, complement the "floating" quality of the house.



The facade treatment reflects the hierarchy of the levels from the ground up – from public to private to public.

• This article first appeared in the December 2018 issue of Home & Decor, which is published by SPH Magazines.

• Get the January and latest issue of Home & Decor (below) now at all newsstands or download the digital edition of Home & Decor from the App Store, Magzter or Google Play. Also, see more inspiring homes at www.homeanddecor.com.sg



RootAwakening

Constant winds, hot sun can dry out ficus plant

I have had this ficus for about two months. Three weeks ago, the leaves turned yellow and black and started falling. A pH meter reading of the soil showed that it was at seven and the sub-soil is highly moist even though I water the plant every other day and add soluble fertiliser every two weeks. The plant gets about four hours of direct sunlight in the afternoon. What is wrong with it?

Antonio Daroya

The leaves seem to indicate that the plant is suffering from some kind of moisture and heat stress.

Is it exposed to winds? Coupled with the hot afternoon sun, constant winds can dry the plant out despite regular watering at the roots. So you may want to move it to a more sheltered location where it is protected from wind. The site should still be sunny and the plant should be watered regularly to ensure the roots do not dry out.

Do check the health of the roots. Healthy roots should appear white and feel solid. Root issues can contribute to the plant's inability to absorb water, leading to symptoms you have described.

Also check that the roots have not totally filled the pot. In such a situation, there is very little soil left to hold moisture for the plant and it should be repotted in a larger pot with fresh soil.

Avoid disturbing the root ball to minimise transplant shock.



Orchid may be suffering from moisture stress

I have an orchid plant that was growing well and blooming. Three weeks ago, the leaves started turning yellow and one of the flowers dropped. A few leaves have also dropped and I do not see new roots growing. What should I do to revive this plant?

Cheong Yin Ping

Your plant is grown using charcoal chips, which dry out quickly.

If it is grown in a high-rise apartment that gets a lot of sun and wind, the roots tend to dry out too fast and the plant will experience moisture stress.

During hot and dry weather, you may want to provide some shade and increase the frequency at which you water the plant. Mist the growing location to cool it down and increase the ambient humidity.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• Answers by Dr Wilson Wong, an NParks-certified practising horticulturist and park manager. He is the founder of Green Culture Singapore and an adjunct assistant professor (Food Science & Technology) at the National University of Singapore.

• Have a gardening query? E-mail it with clear, high-resolution pictures of at least 1MB, if any, and your full name to stlife@sph.com.sg



Chinese Crown Orchid likes sunny spot, well-drained soil

I found this plant growing in the wild at Zhenghua Park. It looks like a miniature orchid. What is it and how do I take care of it?

Anthony Tan

The orchid is botanically known as Eulophia graminea and has common names such as Chinese Crown Orchid, Grass Orchid and Bawang Hantu.

It is a terrestrial orchid that frequently springs up in areas that have been newly filled with soil. It produces numerous roots and can be difficult to transplant successfully when dug out and moved to a pot.

The plant prefers a sunny location with direct sunlight. At home, you can grow it in a pot with well-drained and moisture-retentive soil.



Young Pepper Elder plant can be eaten raw as a vegetable

What is this plant? The young shoots of this plant recently appeared in my other potted plants. They are thriving despite my not watering them. Are they weeds?

Chan Lee Kim

The plant's botanical name is Peperomia pellucida and it has common names such as Shiny Bush and Pepper Elder. It often occurs as a weed, where it produces seeds readily and they multiply in flower pots if the plants are not removed.

The young tender plant parts can be eaten raw as a vegetable. The plant has various folkloric medicinal uses, but as with many plants, its medicinal properties have not been scientifically studied, hence be cautious if you are using it to treat illnesses.



Keep Nong Nooch Vine in cool semi-shade

Why are the leaves of my Nong Nooch plant turning black? They also fall off easily. I have had this plant for many years and this is the first time it has happened.

Teresa Lau

It appears that your Nong Nooch Vine (Petraeovitex wolfei) may be suffering from heat stress and has been allowed to dry out.

Note that this plant prefers to be grown in a semi-shaded and cool location. Ensure the roots are kept moist at all times and do not allow the plant to dry out.

You may find it helpful to mulch the roots with chipped dry leaves or good-quality compost to reduce the rate of evaporation and keep the roots cool. Also, protect the plant if the area you are growing it in is windy.

Did you recently fertilise or spray the plant with a pesticide? An overdose of a fertiliser or pesticide can cause burn marks on the leaves. It is recommended to use a lower dose than what is printed on the label to be on the safe side. For pesticides, spray a small portion of the plant to see if there are any adverse reactions before spraying the entire plant. Spray plants during the cooler part of the day, like in the evening.

PHOTOS: ANTHONY TAN, ANTONIO DAROYA, CHAN LEE KIM, CHEONG YIN PING, TERESA LAU

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Bauhaus celebrates 100 years

Tel Aviv's White City, mass-market home furnishings and most smartphones owe a large debt to the influential and controversial design school's vision

WEIMAR (Germany) • Bauhaus, the design school that left its mark on everything from teapots to tower blocks and iPhones to Ikea, marks its centenary this year, touching off a politically charged debate about its lasting impact.

The influence of Bauhaus, created during the turbulent period between the world wars and chased out of Germany by the Nazis, can hardly be overstated.

Its radical "form follows function" and "less is more" tenets have become so commonplace that the aesthetics of the modern world are unthinkable without them.

Weimar, with its winding cobblestone alleys and primly restored historical buildings, might seem like an unlikely ground zero for the bombshell launched by Walter Gropius with the school's founding on April 1, 1919.

But the small city 250km southwest of Berlin has been an intellectual hive for centuries and is now at the centre of Bauhaus commemorations around the country and spanning the globe.

"Bauhaus is among our country's most globally influential cultural exports," German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said as he kicked off the celebrations last week.

He noted that when the movement was run out of Germany after Nazi leader Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, it touched off a diaspora that would end up spreading Bauhaus's gospel far and wide.

The clean lines of the United Nations headquarters building in New York, Tel Aviv's White City of 4,000 apartment blocks with pearly facades, mass-market home furnishings and most smartphones owe a large debt to the Bauhaus vision.

The design school, which also counts among its disciples Russian abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky and Switzerland-born surrealist Paul Klee, had at its core the idea of making beautiful design accessible to all social classes.

The reformist vision of the international group of men and women who practised it was rooted in modernist thought and inspired by leaps in technological development after World War I.

"There was of course great suffering and horror after this mendacious war, which had such unbelievably devastating consequences," said Ms Anke Bluemm, a curator with the Bauhaus Foundation in Weimar. "The artists came together to create a new forum for art with very utopian, idealistic ideas."

Professor Winfried Speitkamp, head of Weimar's Bauhaus University – which still uses the original campus to teach the school's hands-on principles to new generations – said the aim was nothing less than to build a new democratic society from the rubble of the kaiser's empire.

"They wanted to break with a very authoritarian, very military-oriented monarchy. But what should that look like?"

Flat roofs, little ornamentation – the minimalist approach was intended to be more affordable and less steeped in fusty German tradition.

Bauhaus' birth dovetailed in time and place with the start of the inter-war Weimar Republic, and it was their shared revolutionary spirit that made them targets of the Nazis.

"It is typical for the far right that anything that challenges the homogeneity of the people and propagates openness and diversity is seen as dangerous," said Prof Speitkamp.

He said that "only five years ago", the Bauhaus jubilee might have been just another staid anniversary. But at a time when Europe and countries around the world were again caught between clashing visions of cultural identity, the



A building designed by architect Yitzhak Rapaport that is part of Tel Aviv's White City of about 4,000 buildings created in the Bauhaus style from the 1930s. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, EPA-EFE, KNOLL

Iconic Bauhaus creations

WHITE CITY OF TEL AVIV

Bauhaus may be best known for its architecture and no city in the world has a larger collection of buildings in its style than Tel Aviv, which is designated as a Unesco World Cultural Heritage site.

Designed from the 1930s by German Jewish architects fleeing the Nazis, the more than 4,000 remaining White City apartment buildings – named for their pearly facades – became affordable housing for new arrivals.

But unlike their predecessors built for the German climate, the Tel Aviv constructions used less glass and added balconies that could capture cool breezes off the Mediterranean to help residents beat the heat.



WAGENFELD LAMP

The simple white hemispheric lamp on a glass cylinder and base is a prime example of the smooth, clean lines which Bauhaus is known for.

Created in 1924 by Wilhelm Wagenfeld, the desk-top masterpiece became a de rigueur bureau appointment, including in Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius' own office in Weimar.

Bauhaus critics have noted that as time passed, the school's streamlined, sometimes sterile look has strayed far from its egalitarian origins to become an elitist status symbol.

Copies of the Wagenfeld lamp now run upwards of €400 (\$618).



BREUER CHAIR

The iconic low-slung Wassily Chair was designed by Marcel Breuer in the 1920s and seen as revolutionary at the time for its use of bent tubular steel and leather.

It is still a huge hit in the design world and is not, as often thought, named for Russian abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky, another Bauhaus acolyte and a friend of Breuer's.

It was only in the 1980s, when the chair was being copied by other designers, that it was dubbed the Wassily Chair for marketing reasons.



BRANDT TEAPOT

The Bauhaus was not only aesthetically radical, but also had a reformist vision for society during its rocky tenure in Germany between the world wars.

It was one of the first technical schools to admit women and had rough gender parity among its student body in Weimar, where the university still teaches Bauhaus principles on the historic campus.

While Gropius tried to consign women to weaving and other traditionally "feminine" disciplines, a few trailblazers, such as Marianne Brandt, also worked in heavier materials.

Her 1924 metal teapot, with an intelligently placed spout for easier pouring, had a giant impact for its whimsically angular geometry exuding a sense of harmony.

A household object once stored in cupboards became a design milestone destined for modern art museums. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

discussion around it had become "explosive".

"Do we want to continue going down the path of globalisation, of free movement and cultural exchange? Or, as some nations are saying, do we need to make our borders stronger and define a nation by ethnicity?"

"That is what the Bauhaus debate is also really about."

Prof Speitkamp cited a contro-

versy in the run-up to the anniversary, in which leftist punk band Feine Sahne Fischfilet were meant to give a concert on the Bauhaus campus in Dessau, where the school was forced to move in 1925.

The gig by the group was hastily cancelled in October by the Bauhaus Foundation, citing "far-right threats" and a desire to steer clear of "political extremism – whether from the right, the left or

elsewhere".

The move was widely slammed as cowardly and blind to the movement's roots.

Instead, a Dessau theatre held the event, which passed off without incident, and the foundation later pledged to remain an "international, open and transparent place for societal debates in the spirit of the historical Bauhaus".

The Bauhaus year will be marked

by the openings of grand new museums in Weimar in April and in Dessau in September – both cities in the former communist east, which has seen a surge in support for the far-right Alternative for Germany party.

A major expansion of Berlin's Bauhaus Archive, which holds the movement's largest collection, is due for completion in 2021.

Last week, Weimar offered a

sneak preview to a small group of journalists of the Haus am Horn, the first single-family home designed according to Bauhaus principles.

The squat, boxy structure with innovations such as a prefabricated kitchen was completed in 1923.

It is undergoing a thorough restoration and will open to the public in May, furnished with Bauhaus classics. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Piano minimalism wins new fans

REVIEW / CONCERT

MINIMALISM REDUX

Margaret Leng Tan
Singapore Courtyard, National Gallery/Wednesday

Chang Tou Liang

In conjunction with National Gallery's exhibition, *Minimalism: Space.Light.Object*, avant-garde pianist and Cultural Medallion recipient Margaret Leng Tan was invited to give recitals as musical reflections on the subject.

The recital, which attracted a sizeable audience, was a three-hour-long affair organised chronologically in three parts.

The first involved the music of pre-minimalists and pioneers, opening with John Cage's *Bacchanale* (1945), his first work for prepared piano. With pieces of felt, a bolt and screws with loose nuts inserted between strings, the Steinway grand was transformed into a clangorous and rattling gamelan with drums.

One of the premises of musical minimalism was the repetition of notes with gradual and minute changes with the progression of time, without particular directions in mind. That was the essence of the earliest work, Erik Satie's *Third Gnossienne* (1890), which Tan described as music that "doesn't go anywhere".

Asian influences underpinning early minimalism was also demonstrated in Alan Hovhaness' *Jhala* (1952), which resounded with hypnotic echoes and the tolling of temple bells.

The second part highlighted classic and post-minimalists, including Steve Reich's *Clapping Music* (1972), performed with two pairs of hands. Tan was assisted by tabla virtuoso Govin Tan, with the duo clapping out a sequence in unison, then going out of phase before gloriously returning together.

John Adams' *China Gates* (1977) and three of William Duckworth's *Time Curve Preludes* (1978) had strong melodic centres, with the added mystique of overtones colouring the sonorities.

In one of the latter pieces, low keys were kept permanently depressed with cloth wedges, allowing higher tones to reflect against the lower strings. Other than Phyllis Chen's *Wunderkammer* from *Curios* (2015), in which the percussionist in Tan unleashed on a smorgasbord of bells, bowls, cymbals and gongs, the Schoenhut toy piano was the star of the third part.

Younger exponents of minimalism were celebrated – David Lang's *Miracle Ear* (1996, three tuna cans were banged on), Joshua Fried's *You Broke It!* (1989 to 2006, a banal tune is repeated like a broken record), Yuichi Matsumoto's *Intention* (2012, with Tan reciting a text by Cage) and Milos Raickovich's *Nadja's Kolo* (2018, a dance with toy piano and grand piano played together).

Most impressive were the three longish pieces that closed each segment. Varied in mood, texture and timbre, each resounded differently as a wall of sound and volume, but all united by Tan's sheer passion, drive and intensity.

Philip Glass' *How Now* (1968), lasting about 25 minutes, was perhaps the most insistent and mind-numbing piece, but Tan had a clock to check on its excesses.

Somei Satoh's *Incarnation II* (1978) suspended time for 11 minutes, with a tsunami of repeated low tones washing over a near-spiritual experience.

Steven Montague's *Paramell Va* (1981) opened with a succession of crossing triads (like Debussy and Villa-Lobos), punctuated with chords and clusters before closing with a big bang.

A standing ovation and most likely converts to new music were the just result.

Staging a show without a script

Dau, a genre-defying work straddling immersive theatre and a live video game, is on show in Paris

PARIS • At the Institute, mathematical equations are written with chalk on blackboards by scientists wearing real laboratory coats.

Of course, in this mid-century Soviet science laboratory, there were no laptops, no Internet and no Wi-Fi.

There were, however, cameras, a director and a production staff who were turning the whole thing into a movie.

Between 2009 and 2011, Russian director Ilya Khrzhanovsky created the most ambitious film set of all time.

His living recreation of a theoretical physics institute took over the town of Kharkiv, Ukraine, and the actors lived their roles 24 hours a day.

No one had a script: If a character was to be a laboratory assistant, the person in the role simply had to live as a laboratory assistant.

Dau, the result of this provocative experiment, is finally on show for the first time in Paris, opening on Thursday and running through Feb 17.

The Theatre du Chatelet and Theatre de la Ville have been taken over with this genre-defying accomplishment, which ballooned from a movie into something between immersive theatre and a live video game.

Exhibition efforts have been plagued by problems.

The debut was initially planned for Berlin in September – intended as the first stop of a three-city tour that would then travel to Paris and London.

It was cancelled weeks before it was supposed to open, when city administrators rejected a proposal to build a concrete wall around the interactive spectacle.

The wall was intended to be 2.4km long and painted by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, encircling the event until its final night, the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, when it would be torn down.

Once announced, the wall began to divide people (as walls do), stirring debates about painful historical events that are never far from the surface in Germany.

"I don't believe in reconstructing a totalitarian system as an experiment," said Ms Sabine Bangert, a politician from the Greens party, who, like many Berliners, felt that the construction of a concrete barrier just metres from where the Berlin Wall once stood was an insult to those whose lives had been torn apart by it.

However, many artists said refusing to show this work was cowardly censorship of artistic expression.

In the end, the wall proposal, which had been negotiated over several years, with millions of dollars of investment, was rejected because the paperwork was not filed correctly.

Its showing in Berlin is still an open question, but it is to open in London in April.

Paris officials received the project's premiere more enthusiastically, but it has nonetheless been

forced to scale back its ambitions.

A proposed bridge that was supposed to arc over the Place du Chatelet, linking the two theatres for the duration of the event, was scrapped in part because of ongoing protests in the city, Khrzhanovsky said.

"The yellow jackets killed the bridge," he said in a telephone interview, because the city authorities were "afraid of terrorism".

A spokesman for the Paris Police said the bridge proposal was refused partly over security concerns, but also because it would have disturbed foot traffic in one of the city's busiest areas.

If the epic shoot was the first phase of the project, the premiere on Thursday is the beginning of the second – and it is just as ambitious.

Upon entering the installation, visitors hand over their cellphones, exchanging them for smartphone-like devices that guide them through the various interactive performances, happenings and film screenings.

Each visitor's experience will be different, although everyone will be invited to see at least one of the 13 feature-length films that have been cut from the footage.

This, however, is only a portion of the material available to watch.

A video-streaming platform, accessible in single-person booths, will show many more scenes, each tagged by character and theme, that let the viewer explore additional storylines.

What about the films? Naturalistic and engrossing, they lure the viewer into the characters' ethical dilemmas, scientific discussions and sexual encounters in real time.

The human search for freedom –

whether within a politically repressive society, a scientific laboratory or a marriage – is a constant theme.

At times, the films show humanity at its lowest: Mental breakdowns and brutally degrading KGB interrogations all feature. It is made more shocking by the knowledge that the people appearing on screen are not acting, but rather, responding to their lived conditions.

"Nobody is ever in the middle of the road with this project," said Ruth Mackenzie, co-artistic director of Theatre du Chatelet. "You either find it provocative or exhilarating."

Khrzhanovsky said it was the project's confrontational nature that spooked officials in Berlin and forced him to scale back its ambitions.

He added: "If it's not possible to build a bridge in Paris or a wall in Berlin, it looks like art exists somewhere in a ghetto, where you can do things, but not visible, not provocative."

But Khrzhanovsky said he remained committed to Dau, despite the need to compromise on his vision.

"For me, satisfaction is when the project will meet the public," he said. "The public is the main collaborator in this phase."

Collaborators from the creative scene, like Mackenzie, are already convinced of the project's significance.

She said: "I've worked on a lot of ambitious projects, but this is the only one that has had mythic status before it's even started."

"It's the world premiere of something that's never been done before." NYTIMES

Ilya Khrzhanovsky (above) is the director of Dau (top, featured in a wax installation), in which actors live their roles 24 hours a day.

PHOTOS: NYTIMES



Do-it-yourself popiah and a classic remastered

Tune in to ST podcast Life Picks, in which Life reporters highlight the best films, concerts, restaurants and arts events.

This week, Life reporters Olivia Ho, Yip Wai Yee and Eunice Quek chat with host Melissa Sim about interactive art at the Digimuse exhibition at the National Museum

of Singapore, do-it-yourself popiah at Peranakan restaurant Folklore and a remastered version of the classic movie, *Schindler's List*.

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Life writers (from left) Olivia Ho, Yip Wai Yee, Eunice Quek and Melissa Sim talk about interactive art at the Digimuse exhibition at the National Museum of Singapore. ST PHOTO: EUNICE QUEK

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Manga queen wins top French comics prize

Rumiko Takahashi is the second woman and second Japanese to win the grand prize at the Angouleme Comics Festival

ANGOULEME (France) • Japanese manga creator Rumiko Takahashi has become only the second woman to win the top prize at France's biggest graphic novel festival.

The 61-year-old, one of the stars of the Japanese form, took the grand prize at the Angouleme Comics Festival – which opened on Thursday – for her life's work.

Two years ago, she was one of a number of women French writer Riaad Sattouf said should have got

the prize instead of him.

The author of the best-selling Arab Of The Future refused the prize and lashed Angouleme's failure to honour enough female creators.

Takahashi – who was not in the western French city to receive the prize – is only the second Japanese to win the accolade, despite the huge popularity of manga in France.

Katushiro Otomo, the author of the Akira series, won in 2015.

France is the biggest market in the world for the comics outside Japan, and this year the Angouleme festival is celebrating the form.

Latest figures show that more than one in three graphic novels sold in the country are manga, with sales jumping 11 per cent last year to 16 million copies.

The hugely prolific Takahashi is one of the most read authors in the world, with her 200 works selling more than 200 million copies.

She is best known in the West for her Urusei Yatsura series, a comedy science-fiction story, the romantic comedy Maison Ikkoku and the martial arts saga Ranma 1/2, which helped manga break through in the United States.

Her latest work, the 40-volume Rin-ne, is about a young girl who can see ghosts.

Takahashi pipped American Chris Ware, author of Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid On Earth, and French illustrator Emmanuel Guibert to the prize.

The Golden Wildcat prize for the best graphic novel of the year will be awarded at Angouleme today.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Among the works by manga artist Rumiko Takahashi (above) is Inuyasha (left), a feudal fairy tale.

PHOTO: WEIBO/BILIBILICOMIC

Shanghai Disney to build Zootopia-themed land

SHANGHAI • Shanghai Disney Resort is making its second major expansion in less than three years of operation, signalling the ambition of media conglomerate The Walt Disney to meet China's growing appetite for quality themed entertainment.

The resort announced on Wednesday the building of the world's first Zootopia-themed land in its latest park, featuring characters and stories from Disney's animated hit Zootopia (2016). Con-

struction will begin later this year for an unspecified opening date.

The expansion will bring the total number of themed lands to eight in the Shanghai facility, which debuted in June 2016.

"The rapid rate of expansion at Shanghai Disney Resort demonstrates our confidence and commitment to the company's future development in China," said Mr Bob Chapek, chairman of parks, experiences and consumer products at The Walt Disney.

Zootopia is designed to blend Disney's storytelling and technologies in order to bring this fan favourite movie and its characters to life, the company said.

By rolling out its own merchandise, entertainment and food and beverage offerings, the new land will also invite guests to fully immerse themselves in the mammalian metropolis of Zootopia, and go along on an adventure with Judy and Nick, the lead characters from the Academy Award-winning

movie that has been the highest-grossing animated film in Chinese box-office history.


Blockbuster intellectual properties with a substantial follower base such as Zootopia stand to attract both newcomers and recurring visitors alike, said Dr He Jianmin, a professor specialising in tourism management at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

"Disney has this long tradition to introduce new attractions to its parks each year. New IP rollouts

can provide constant inspirations for Disney's parks and resorts, therefore enhancing user loyalty," he said.

Shanghai Disneyland logged some 11 million visitors in the first year of operation, putting it in the top eight theme parks worldwide and one of the most-visited sites in China, according to data from the Themed Entertainment Association and consulting firm Aecom released in May last year.


CHINA DAILY/ASIA NEWS NETWORK



I toured the home of master potter Iskandar Jalil.

Toh Wen Li
Journalist
The Straits Times

Journalism goes beyond the 24-hour news cycle of current affairs. I have journeyed through the homes of artists and discovered the muse of Singapore's greatest creative minds. As a journalist, you never know what to expect at work. If you're inspired by the spirit of discovery, come take the path less travelled.





Application deadline: Undergraduate Scholarship: 15 February 2019 Mid-Term Scholarship: 15 April 2019
Scan the QR code to sign up. Alternatively, email scholars@sph.com.sg



Comics

BABY BLUES



Free to air

CHANNEL 5

AM
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 15 (HD) (PG) (V)
7.00 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)
8.00 On The Red Dot – Old Enough! (CA)
8.30 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
9.30 Secret Meat Business (IE)
10.00 Euromaxx (HD) (PG) (Cul)
10.30 Arts 21 (Cul)
11.00 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (HD) (PG) (IE)
PM
12.00 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)
12.30 Films & Stars (PG) (V)
1.00 America's Got Talent 12 (HD) (PG) (V)
3.00 Little Big Shots: Forever Young (PG) (V)
4.00 Revolution (HD) (PG) (V)
5.00 Designer In The House 2 (HD) (V)
5.30 Divided (US) (HD) (PG) (V)
6.00 Hungry For Love (HD) (V)
6.30 The Simpsons 29 (HD) (PG) (SC)
7.00 Cine On 5: How To Train Your Dragon (PG) (M)
9.00 News Tonight (HD)
9.30 The Strangest Weather On Earth 2 (HD) (CC)
10.00 Scary Scary Saturday: Haunt (PG13) (M) (Premiere)
11.45 The Shannara Chronicles (PG13) (D)
AM
1.20 Grimm 5 (HD) (PG13) (D)
2.10 Timeless (HD) (PG) (D)
3.00 Just For Laughs Gags 17 (HD)
3.20 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (PG) (IE)
4.20 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)

CHANNEL 8

AM
6.00 Neighbourhood Chef 2 (HD) (V)
7.00 Portrait Of Home 2 (D)
9.00 DreamCorps (HD) (S)
9.30 Firerobo (S)
10.00 The Adventures Of Little Carp (S)
10.30 All New Jackie Chan Adventures (S)
11.00 The Love 97.2 Breakfast Quartet 2 (CC) (V)
PM
12.00 Foodie Sunday (V)
1.00 Golden Age Talentime (HD) (CC) (V)

2.00 Challenge The Impossible 2 (HD) (V)
4.00 My Star Guide 13 (HD) (V)
4.30 Beyond Words (PG) (CC) (D)
6.30 Singapore Today (HD) (News)
7.00 Spring Flower (PG) (CC) (D)
9.00 The Sheng Siong Show 24 (V)
10.00 News Tonight (HD)
10.30 Saturday Cinema: My Lucky Star (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.45 My Amazing Bride (PG) (CC) (D)
2.45 Behind Every Job (IE)
3.45 The Ten Deadly Sins (PG13) (D)
4.10 The Deer And The Cauldron (HD) (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

AM
10.00 Fantastic Baby 2 (V)
11.30 Project W (IE)
PM
12.30 Blue Tick (PG) (CC) (D)
1.30 World Food (CC) (IE)
2.30 Artistic Journeys (IE)
3.00 Golden Rainbow (PG) (CC) (D)
5.00 Lady With Class (PG) (CC) (D)
7.00 Puzzle Masters (V)
9.00 The Entertainer (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 News Tonight
11.30 Puzzle Masters (V)
AM
1.30 Lord Of Shanghai (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Close

CNA

AM
6.00 Singapore Tonight
7.00 News Now
7.30 Correspondents' Diary
8.00 News Now
8.30 This Weekend
9.00 News Now
9.30 Asia Business First Weekend
10.02 Insight
11.00 News Now
11.30 Conversation With
PM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Asia Business First Weekend
1.02 Conversation With
1.30 Super Octogenarians
2.00 News Now
2.30 This Weekend
3.00 News Now
3.30 Asia Business First Weekend
4.02 Insight

5.00 News Now
5.30 Edible Wild
6.00 News Now
6.30 A Beautiful World
7.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
8.00 Primetime Asia
8.30 Correspondents' Diary
9.02 A Big Little Murder (CC)
10.00 Singapore Tonight
10.30 Money Mind
11.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
AM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Conversation With
1.02 A Big Little Murder
1.30 Money Mind
2.00 News Now
2.30 Asia Business First Weekend
3.02 Insight
4.00 News Now
4.30 Money Mind
5.02 A Big Little Murder
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

PM
1.00 Vasantham Gold: Selva Magal (PG) (M)
4.00 Bollywood Masti: Hum Saath Saath Hain (PG) (Hindi) (M)
7.00 Thirai Express (HD) (CC) (V)
8.00 Vera Level (HD) (CC) (IE)
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)
9.00 Tamil Silver Screen: Nibunan (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.00 Tamil Seithi (News) (R)
12.30 Close

OKTO

AM
7.00 Tip The Mouse (P)
8.00 Elias: Rescue Team Adventures (HD) (P)
8.30 Super Wings (HD) (P)
9.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)
9.30 Metalions (S)
10.00 Pokemon The Series: Sun And Moon (HD) (S)
10.30 Smurfs (HD) (S)
11.00 Lego Ninjago – Sons Of Garmadon (HD) (S)
11.30 Extreme Football (HD) (S)
PM
12.00 Totally Totto (HD) (S)

12.30 Fableicious (HD) (PG) (S)
1.00 Loud House (S)
1.30 Jane And The Dragon (S)
2.00 Inazuma Eleven (S)
2.30 The Deep (HD) (S)
3.00 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (PG) (S)
3.30 CardFight! Vanguard G: Next (HD) (S)
4.00 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (S)
4.30 Loud House (S)
5.00 Jane And The Dragon (S)
5.30 Inazuma Eleven (S)
6.00 Basic Mini-tary Training (S)
7.00 The Deep (HD) (CC) (S)
7.30 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (CC) (S)
8.00 CardFight! Vanguard G: Next (HD) (CC) (S)
8.30 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (CC) (S)
9.00 Sportsmax (HD) (Sports)
9.30 Whacked Out Sports (PG) (V)
10.00 ONE Championship 2018/19: Quest For Greatness (Kuala Lumpur) (PG13) (Sports) (Encore)
AM
12.40 Close

SURIA

PM
3.00 Juara Memasak Milenia (CC) (V)
4.00 Hati Belum Berkubur (PG) (CC) (Telemovie)
6.00 Tahu Nahu (S)
6.30 Kerjayaan Wanita: 8 Wanita Singapura 2014 (CC) (IE)
7.00 Jenayah Tersembunyi (PG) (CC) (IE)
7.30 Aku Seniman #2 (IE)
8.00 Berita (HD) (News)
8.30 Sepahtu Reunion Live 2 (HD) (CC) (V)
9.30 Setia Menunggumu (PG) (CC) (D)
10.30 Extreme Roadtrip (IE)
11.00 Detik (PG) (CA)
11.30 Berita (HD) (News) (R)
AM
12.00 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs; CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture; D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies; P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance; R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom; V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to www.starhub.com/tv or www.singtelv.com.sg

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

AM
7.35 Road Hawks
8.30 Pawn Stars 19
9.00 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
9.55 Alone
10.50 Counting Cars 6
11.20 JFK Declassified: Tracking Oswald
PM
12.15 Hunting ISIS
1.10 Chasing Monsters
2.05 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
3.00 Alone 4
3.55 Storage Wars: Miami
4.25 The Pickers 11
5.20 Road Hawks
6.15 Counting Cars 5
6.40 Storage Wars 12
7.10 The Curse Of Oak Island 5
8.05 History Drama: Project Blue Book
9.00 History Drama: Vikings 5
9.55 Monster Motor Challenge

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

AM
6.00 Married At First Sight US 4
9.00 Married At First Sight Australia 4
PM
12.00 Born This Way 2
1.00 This Time Next Year
1.55 Ten: Murder Island
3.30 A Sister's Secret
5.05 Gok's Fill Your House For Free
6.00 Married At First Sight US 4
9.00 Arranged 2
10.00 The Watcher In The Woods
11.35 My Haunted House 3

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

AM
7.55 Mighty Joe Young
9.50 Meet The Parents
11.35 12 Strong (NC16)
PM
1.45 The Mummy (2017) (NC16)
3.35 Inside Out
5.05 Despicable Me 3
6.35 Captain America: Civil War
9.00 Inconceivable (2017) (NC16)
10.45 True Detective 3 (NC16)
11.45 American Assassin (NC16)
AM
1.35 Wolves At The Door (NC16)

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

AM
6.50 Star Wars: Episode II – Attack Of The Clones
9.15 Bulletproof Monk
11.00 Strike Back 6
PM
12.00 Black Hawk Down (NC16)
2.25 Driven
4.20 Top Gun
6.10 Saturday Night Fever
8.05 Hollywood Homicide
10.00 Strike Back 6
11.00 Red
AM
12.55 Pulp Fiction (M18)

HUB E CITY (CHANNEL 825)

AM
7.00 Chinese Restaurant 2 (HD)
9.00 Noble Aspirations (HD)
PM
12.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)
1.00 Mr Player 7 (HD)
3.00 Singer 2019 (HD)
5.00 Viva La Romance (HD)
7.00 Perfect Match 6 (HD)
8.45 Wok Of Love (HD)
11.00 Happy Camp 2 (HD)

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

AM
6.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018
12.30 Table Tennis: Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open: Women's Semi-finals, Men's Quarter-finals and Mixed Doubles Finals
11.00 Tennis: ATP Champions Tour 2018
11.30 National Basketball League 2018/19: Round 15 Illawarra Hawks Vs Cairns Taipans
PM
1.30 Presidential Cycling Tour Of Turkey 2018 Highlights/2.30 Tennis: Deuce 2019
3.00 Tennis: ATP World Tour Uncovered 2019/3.30 FEI Equestrian World 2018
4.15 ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019: Men's Free Skating
8.25 Extreme Sports: World Surf League 2018: Billabong Pipe Masters Highlights
9.25 ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019: Ice Dance Free Dance
AM
1.00 Tennis: Deuce 2019
1.30 Volleyball Nations League 2018 Men's Final Rounds – Finals

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

AM
8.00 Magazine: Omnispot.TV
8.46 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton Day 1 Matches 9 To 16 (Live)
PM
12.00 Magazine: Omnispot.TV
12.30 Magazine: The Burning Issue
1.00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton Day 1 Matches 17 To 24 (Live)
4.00 Fiba World Basketball 2019
4.30 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)
5.30 National Basketball League Round 15 Illawarra Hawks Vs Cairns Taipans
7.30 Magazine: Omnispot.TV
8.00 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 CLS Knights Indonesia Vs Zhuhai Wolf Warriors (Live)
10.00 Wrestling: WWE Afterburn (PG)
11.00 The Football Review
11.30 Magazine: Omnispot.TV
AM
12.00 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)
1.00 Fiba World Basketball 2019
1.30 Football: EFL League 2 2018/19 Bury Vs Lincoln City (Live)
3.30 Magazine: Trans World Sport 2019
4.30 Magazine: Omnispot.TV
4.50 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton Day 2 Quarter-finals Matches 25 To 36 (Live)

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

AM
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show
7.55 The Heroic Quest Of The Valiant Prince Ivandoe
8.00 Teen Titans Go!
9.00 We Bare Bears
9.30 Transformers: Cyberverse
10.00 Summer Camp Island
11.00 OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes
11.30 Ben 10
PM
12.00 Unikitty
12.30 The Amazing World Of Gumball
1.00 Craig Of The Creek
1.30 Running Man Animation
2.00 We Bare Bears
2.30 The Powerpuff Girls
3.00 Summer Camp Island
4.00 Dreamworks Dragons: Defenders Of Berk
5.00 Transformers: Cyberverse
5.30 Teen Titans Go!
6.00 OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes
6.30 Ben 10
7.00 Craig Of The Creek
8.00 Running Man Animation
9.30 Summer Camp Island
10.00 Regular Show
10.30 Steven Universe
11.00 Clarence
11.30 Adventure Time
AM
12.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
1.00 Supernoods
2.00 Adventure Time
3.00 The Amazing World Of Gumball
4.00 We Bare Bears
5.00 Grizzly And The Lemmings

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

AM
6.00 The Amazing Race 29
7.40 Supernatural 14
8.30 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
10.05 MacGyver 3
10.55 Hawaii Five-0 9
11.45 Team Ninja Warrior 2
PM
1.25 The Blacklist 6
2.15 Seal Team 2
3.05 MacGyver 3
3.55 Hawaii Five-0 9
4.45 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
6.25 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2
7.15 Team Ninja Warrior 2
8.55 MacGyver 3
9.45 Hawaii Five-0 9
10.35 The Blacklist 6
11.25 MacGyver 3
AM
12.05 Supernatural 14
12.55 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
2.30 The Amazing Race 29
4.10 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

AM
6.00 Top 20 Funniest
9.20 Gotham 5
10.10 The Big Bang Theory 12
10.35 Young Sheldon 2
11.00 Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets
PM
1.50 The Big Bang Theory 9
3.25 Friends 9
3.55 Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban
6.35 Pacific Rim
9.00 Blindspot 4
9.50 Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice
12.05 Arrow 7
12.55 Gotham 5
AM
1.45 Supergirl 2

COMEDY CENTRAL ASIA (HD) (CHANNEL 324)

AM
7.15 Just For Laughs Gags 13
7.40 Just For Laughs Gags 14
8.10 Mr Bean
9.10 Most Ridiculous
9.35 Your Face Or Mine 4
10.25 Most Ridiculous 2
11.15 The Relationship Show
PM
12.05 Just For Laughs Gags 14
12.35 The Goldbergs 5
1.25 Hot In Cleveland 6
1.50 The Comedy Jam
2.15 Corporate
3.05 Detroiters
3.55 The Goldbergs 5
4.45 Hot In Cleveland 6
5.10 The Comedy Jam
5.35 Your Face Or Mine 3
6.30 Most Ridiculous 2
7.25 Jeff Ross Presents Roast Battle 3
8.40 The Burn With Jeff Ross 2
9.00 Back To School Special
9.50 Above Average Presents
10.00 Saturday Night Live 44
11.05 Funny As Hell 4
AM
12.05 The Jim Jefferies Show
12.55 Inside Amy Schumer
1.35 Jeff Ross Presents Roast Battle 3
2.50 Funny As Hell 4
3.50 Chappelle's Show
4.55 The Daily Show 24

JIA LE (HD) (CHANNEL 502)

AM
8.30 Top Singers
10.00 All Out Of Love
PM
12.00 Stylish Man
1.00 Super Nightclub
2.30 All Out Of Love
4.30 Top Singers
6.00 Stylish Man
7.00 All Out Of Love
9.00 The Legend Of Golden Music
10.00 Hua Hee Seko-Lah 5
10.30 The Golden Melodies 2018
AM
12.00 Stylish Man

TheStarsSay

Aries (March 21 - April 19)
Someone close needs you badly. Score points with your friend as you swoop in to the rescue.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)
Shake things up in your life. You need a change and it is easy to get company along for the ride.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)
You are having too much fun to worry about the future and it ensures more of the same to come.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)
Though you would almost certainly rather take a break, you need to keep forging on instead.

Leo (July 23 - Aug 22)
You are more expressive than usual and feeling the urge to let someone close know how you feel.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)
You and your mate need to make an investment together soon. It is a good time to talk things out.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)
You cannot help but engage with people. Make folks feel comfortable before asking them for anything.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)
Sometimes you have to give up to win big. Try a strategic retreat to get ready for the final battle.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
Spend the day getting ready for the big event coming up. Ask for help if you think you could use it.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
Cultural activities hold more interest than usual for you, so try to engage with people.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)
Your social style is working out well, but make sure you can get others to see things your way.

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20)
Settle up with a friend or client. See if you can get your people to accept a compromise.

- Provided by Astrology.com (www.astrology.com)

Radio

KISS92 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Desiree Lai
PM
12.00 Charmaine Yee
8.00 Jill Lim

KISS92 (TOMORROW)

AM
6.00 American Top 40 With Ryan Seacrest
PM
12.00 Jill Lim

ONE FM 91.3 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Cheryl Miles
PM
12.00 Harry Corro

ONE FM 91.3 (TOMORROW)

PM
12.00 Harry Corro

MONEY FM 89.3 (WEEKENDS)

AM
7.00 Weekend Mornings With Jason Dasey

Tides

SUN RISE/SET TIME: 7:16am/7:19pm
MOON RISE/SET TIME: -/11.44am

TIDES TODAY: Singapore: 3.09am (2.9m), 8.54am (1.2m), 2.43pm (3.1m), 9.24pm (0.7m). Desaru: 2.45am (2.9m), 8.26am (1.5m), 2.11pm (2.7m), 8.35pm (1m). Port Dickson: 5am (0.3m), 10.21am (2.4m), 5pm (0.4m), 10.45pm (2.6m). Mersing: 2.12am (3.2m), 8.35am (1.6m), 1.49pm (2.6m), 7.58pm (1.2m).

TIDES TOMORROW: Singapore: 3.48am (2.8m), 9.45am (1.2m), 3.41pm (2.8m), 10.09pm (0.9m). Desaru: 3.24am (2.8m), 9.18am (1.4m), 3.16pm (2.6m), 9.30pm (1.3m). Port Dickson: 5.43am (0.5m), 11.07am (2.1m), 5.25pm (0.5m), 11.30pm (2.4m). Mersing: 2.47am (3.1m), 9.23am (1.5m), 2.58pm (2.5m), 8.57pm (1.5m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to www.nea.gov.sg

Fifty Shades author unveils new romance

LOS ANGELES • The press release describes the book as “a roller-coaster ride of danger and desire that leaves the reader breathless to the very last page.”

E. L. James, author of the blockbuster *Fifty Shades Of Grey* novels, opens a new chapter with what she calls a “Cinderella romance for the 21st century”. Called *The Mister*,

the novel by the Briton will be published in Britain and North America on April 16, publisher Vintage Books said on Thursday.

The story, set in London and Eastern Europe, centres on an aristocratic Englishman who falls for a mysterious, musically gifted young woman who has recently arrived in England.

“I’m so excited to finally get this passionate new romance out into the world,” James said in a statement.

“It’s a Cinderella story for the 21st century.

“Maxim and Alessia have led me on a fascinating journey and I hope that my readers will be swept away by their thrilling and sensual tale.”

James’ *Fifty Shades* trilogy, featuring bondage, discipline, dominance, submission and sadomasochism (BDSM), was first published in 2012 and shot to the top of bestseller lists around the world with 150 million copies sold.

The novels were made into three movies for Universal Pictures that took in more than US\$1 billion

(S\$1.36 billion) at the global box office. But the so-called “mummy porn” that drew a mainstream female audience also provoked a debate about the lines between erotica and emotional or sexual abuse.

There was no word on Thursday on whether *The Mister* would be adapted for a movie.

REUTERS

Fiery start for Hindi film on anti-colonial heroine

MUMBAI • The last anti-colonial epic – the *Pirates Of The Caribbean*-style *Thugs Of Hindostan* – sank at the Indian box office in November, despite starring big names such as Aamir Khan and Amitabh Bachchan.

Now, another Brit-bashing offering from Bollywood has hit cinemas, a patriotic epic heavy on martial arts and about a warrior queen dubbed India’s Joan of Arc.

The Hindi-language *Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi* has got off to a fiery start, with its star Kangana Ranaut threatening to “destroy” protesters who said the film alludes to an affair with a British officer.

Rani Laxmibai was a leading figure in a failed 1857 uprising against Britain’s East India Company, which led London to impose direct control.

Killed in the Battle of Gwalior in June 1858 that ended the rebellion, she has lived on as an independence icon and is usually depicted brandishing a sword while leading her troops to war on a horse.

The film debuted over India’s Republic Day weekend, one of two annual holidays that celebrate independence.

Industry watchers expect audiences to flock to a flick that will be full of nationalistic fervour, featuring elaborate costumes and grand battle scenes.

Indian media reports said fanatical groups belonging to India’s Rajput caste had held protests against what they believed would be a scene alluding to a relationship between Laxmibai and a British officer.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Actress Kangana Ranaut stars as the title character in *Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi*. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

On social media



UPROAR OVER CHILDREN’S SCHOOL: Netizens have given well-known Chinese singer Sun Nan an F grade for sending his children to a school whose academic credentials are reportedly below par.

The hashtag, *Sun Nan Sends His Kids To Unqualified School*, which has received more than 260 million views on Weibo, started after his wife Pan Wei gave an interview to promote her book *The Art Of Artless Life*. She revealed that the family had relocated from Beijing to Xuzhou three years ago to pave the way for their children to study in a “traditional culture” school.

There was an Internet uproar when the Education Department of Xuzhou revealed that the school – *Chung Hwa College of Traditional Culture* – was not recognised as an official educational institution.

Netizens wondered if Pan was an “evil stepmother”, sending her own daughter with Sun to a good school, but registering her stepchildren – Sun’s two kids from a past marriage – in *Chung Hwa College*.

Some netizens even urged Sun’s ex-wife to rectify the situation, according to the *What’s On Weibo* portal. Others also speculated if Sun and Pan had a financial stake in the college, prompting its head to issue a denial.

The singer has not addressed the issue on his official Weibo page yet.

PHOTO: SUN NAN/INSTAGRAM

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(U.P. \$399)

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FISKE Sideboard 140cm
\$859*
(U.P. \$1,499)

STIGA Multi-purpose Shelf
\$399*
(U.P. \$629)

SKO Shoe Rack
\$259*
(U.P. \$599)

ENKEL 5FT Bed Frame
\$1,099*
(U.P. \$1,779)

IKON 3-Seater Sofa
\$1,099*
(U.P. \$1,999)

LOIS Dining Set (1 Table + 2 Bench)
\$1,099*
(U.P. \$1,885)

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MOTORING

D **REFRESHED C-CLASS**
The C180 keeps its good looks and upgrades to a nine-speed transmission
D16



HYUNDAI I30N
An early convert talks about this Golf GTI rival
D18

Zooming in on e-bikes

Supercar agent Eurosports Global wants to be the Tesla of two-wheelers.
Christopher Tan reports.
D12&13



DESIGN: SALLY LAM PHOTOS: EST, KEVIN LIM

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Banking on e-bikes for the next lap

Singapore electric motorcycle maker Eurosports Technologies is banking on crippling fuel subsidies and worsening air pollution in South-east Asian countries for success

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

What do state fuel subsidies have to do with a publicly listed supercar agent?

Plenty, if you ask Mr Melvin Goh, chief executive of Singapore-based Eurosports Global, which holds the Lamborghini and Alfa Romeo franchises.

Mr Goh's outfit has just invested in an electric motorcycle manufacturing venture and he is targeting countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, where government-funded fuel

subsidies continue to be a drain on state coffers.

In an exclusive preview of the EST-X line of battery-powered two-wheelers this week, Mr Goh's team pointed out that fuel subsidies cost South-east Asian states US\$44 billion (S\$60 billion) a year.

"It's a huge amount. But if any government so much as reduces the subsidy, there will be riots," he said.

This is where the EST-X comes in. Developed by Eurosports Technologies, a fully owned unit of Eurosports Global, the bike, Mr Goh believes, will allow states to wean themselves off fuel subsidies.

The region is also an enormous motorcycle market, accounting for annual sales of 15 million units. Mr Goh reveals he is aiming to capture just 0.33 per cent of that market in the first year and 1 per cent in the second year.

Production of the EST-X1 is slated to begin in the first quarter of next year. It would be priced at around US\$4,500, which would be about 90 per cent pricier than a 150cc Honda motorcycle like the CB150R in Jakarta.

A more "entry-level" model, dubbed EST-X2, will follow a year later. It is expected to be priced at around US\$2,500, or double the

cost of a beginner's bike like the Honda Beat.

But Eurosports Technologies says its electric bikes will be 30 per cent cheaper than equivalent petrol models over a lifetime.

This is because the cost of electricity will be less than a third the cost of fuel per kilometre. And these bikes will incur less maintenance costs – for instance, no oil, filter or spark plug change.

And unlike electric cars, which require high-capacity charging infrastructure, e-bikes can be recharged via the ubiquitous home wall socket.

Eurosports Technologies chief operating officer Joel Chang said there

is another significant benefit: no more queuing up for petrol.

"Queues at petrol stations can be an hour long," he pointed out. "And because riders fill up just a litre or two each time as they don't want to spend too much at one go, they end up refuelling two or three times a day."

The only potential concern is battery life, but the company said it will offer a warranty ensuring batteries retain 80 per cent efficiency for seven years.

To help riders switch, Eurosports Technologies will also offer a leasing plan for its bikes.

"This way, they can try out the

new bike without a high financial commitment, and they don't have to worry about maintenance or battery life," Mr Goh said.

Besides the potential to pare down what they spend on fuel subsidies, switching to e-bikes will help countries reduce air pollution – one of the leading causes of premature deaths in urban areas, and a perennial burden on healthcare systems.

Mr Goh noted that this was one of the reasons for the Chinese government's strong support for electric vehicles (EVs). For the past decade, Beijing has been dishing out generous tax incentives and subsidies to drive the manufactur-

ing and purchase of EVs.

Even if the country is expected to reduce these sweeteners eventually, they have already helped position China as the world's leading manufacturer of EVs.

Many EST-X components will be sourced from China, Mr Goh revealed.

He said the new company has already raised about \$5 million and is looking at a total sum of \$30 million to get the venture off the ground.

Response from potential investors during this week's road show has been "very encouraging", he added.

christan@sph.com.sg

The chassis concept for Eurosports Technologies' EST-X battery-powered two-wheelers.
PHOTO: EUROSPTS TECHNOLOGIES

Tesla on two wheels

Eurosports Technologies is positioning its electric bike as a two-wheeled Tesla.

Shaped like a cross between a scooter and an underbone motorcycle, the EST-X1 prototype will have high Internet connectivity which allows "live" updates to improve efficiency.

Also in the plans is a mobile app which helps riders locate available charging points – these will be sited at convenience stores, supermarkets and eateries – alert them if the bike is moved, and help track it down if it is stolen.

The e-bike will also be made compatible with ride-hailing and food delivery apps, so that riders can use it for commerce without having to rely solely on their mobile phone.

Users can also lock and unlock their bikes with their phone.

At a sneak preview where photographing of the actual prototype was not allowed, Eurosports Technologies head of design Nicola Butti revealed that the bike will have an exposed 7kW motor, a two-speed automatic transmission and be chain-driven.

The set-up will allow the EST-X to hit 40kmh in less than three seconds and have a top speed of around 100kmh.

Power will be from a 5kWh lithium battery which can be fully charged in under two hours and provide a real-world range of 150km.

The bike has a long wheelbase and weighs around 120kg.

Its steel-aluminium frame is likely to be fabricated in Thailand or China. Its battery and motor will also be sourced from China and its transmission may also be built there.

Both the frame and transmission were designed by Eurosports Technologies.

The company is looking to set up an assembly facility in Singapore, failing which it will do so in a neighbouring country.

Christopher Tan

Love in 200 words

This Valentine's Day, The Straits Times invites you to tell us a love story in miniature

Send us a story about love – true, imagined, funny, sad, yours, anybody's – in 200 words. 200 being the magic number this Bicentennial year. We will publish the best entries on Feb 10.

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- Entries should not contain profanity or graphic language.

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A silver Ford Focus station wagon is shown from a front-three-quarter view, parked on a dark, reflective surface. The car is positioned in front of a modern building with a facade made of large, triangular glass panels in shades of blue and white. The car's license plate reads 'TMA 801'. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

PHOTOS: BENTLEY, FORD, HONDA, MASERATI, NISSAN

Ford has enhanced its Mondeo range to include a hybrid wagon (above), equipped with a 2-litre turbodiesel mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission with a rotary dial on the dash. The car also has a host of intelligent features.



Nissan's NV300 concept van highlights the possibilities of customisation. The concept is a woodwork workshop on wheels (above), packed with clever solutions for professionals. It has an all-in-one portable battery solution for clean, efficient power on the go, a storage capacity of 700Wh and maximum output of 1kW.

Comprising second-life batteries recovered from Nissan Leaf electric cars, the power pack can even be recharged using a roof-mounted solar panel.

Honda has confirmed the global premiere of a new electric car prototype (above) at the Geneva Motor Show. It will be part of Honda's commitment for two-thirds of European sales to feature electrified drivetrains by 2025. The design forms a link to Honda's Urban EV concept shown at the 2017 Frankfurt Motor Show.



To celebrate its centenary this year, Bentley will introduce a special edition model inspired by one of its iconic racing models at the Geneva Motor Show on March 5.

In 1919, Walter Owen Bentley created a company with a simple objective: to build “a fast car, a good car, the best in its class”. This guiding principle has driven Bentley ever since, pushing the brand forward and making it the leader in automotive luxury around the world today. July 10 marks its 100th year.



Maserati has created a special edition of its Levante sport utility vehicle (above) to target customers in Europe and Asia. The Vulcano is limited to 150 units and boasts special finishes and matte Grigio Lava exterior colour.

It will be available with either a 350hp or 430hp twin-turbocharged V6 petrol engine and built at Ferrarì's factory in Maranello. With black chrome front grille and logos, glossy black window surrounds, body-coloured door handles and dark exhaust tailpipes, the car rides on 21-inch Helios wheels. Behind them are six-piston Brembo dual-cast brakes.



Motor Image Group, the distributor of Subaru vehicles in nine markets across Asia, has confirmed that its customers are not affected by the power steering defect announced by Subaru Corp.

Subaru said on Wednesday that it had suspended production at its plants in Japan and will likely resume production and shipments as early as Jan 28. This was due to defects affecting the power steering in three vehicle models, the Forester, the XV and the Impreza. The affected vehicles were manufactured between late-December last year and Jan 16.

Christopher Tan

TorqueShop

How often do I need to top up my car's engine oil? When I check the dip-stick, I never seem to get the same oil-level mark each time, so I am not sure how much to top up or if I need to at all.

Engine oil should be checked using the dip-stick only when the engine is cold and the car is on level ground.

In any case, the engine must have been at rest for at least half an hour. This is because the

dip-stick literally dips into the oil sump and if the correct level is to be measured, the oil needs to settle.

Oil is pumped up to various parts of the engine when it is running, so there would be little oil in the sump to measure immediately after the engine is turned off.

Pull out the dip-stick and wipe it clean before observing the maximum and minimum marks. Then, insert it back fully into its sleeve before pulling it out again.

You will be able to see a definite strip of oil at the end of the stick and check if it is below the maximum.

If you need to top up, pour in no more than half a litre to avoid the risk of over-filling and then check again later.

Generally, a well-maintained car engine should not require oil top-up between service intervals. It will begin to consume engine oil only after about 180,000km.

Shreejit Changaroth

Bespoke Rolls-Royce is way to go

The car brand is doubling down on customisation services, rather than developing electric technology, to up sales

NEW YORK • More than 90 per cent of all Rolls-Royce vehicles sold are so personalised they are practically one-offs.

With the Phantom estate car, that number reaches 99 per cent. And with the Cullinan sport utility vehicle (SUV), it reaches absolute levels: 100 per cent of those sold have been customised. That is according to Mr Torsten Muller-Otvos, chief executive officer of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, which earlier this month released last year's data showing record global sales.

The figures are notable because they show a big jump in the popularity and value of customising already extremely expensive cars. The average price of a Rolls-Royce sold in the United States, its biggest market, is US\$400,000 (S\$542,600) including options.

In 2016, when 80 per cent of Rolls-Royce vehicles worldwide were heavily customised, bespoke additions added 20 per cent to the purchase price. Last year, the added price was almost 40 per cent.

To keep up with demand, the Englewood-based auto maker hired 100

employees for the bespoke department. That represents an almost six per cent jump in total workforce to 1,900 and indicates the company's focus for next year and beyond.

Rather than developing hybrid or electric technology to grab sales like other manufacturers – never hybrid, maybe electric in 10 years, Mr Muller-Otvos said in October –, Rolls-Royce is doubling down on what is working now.

"It's needed," he said. "Customers are increasingly intrigued by all the possibilities we can offer – they want to put their personal signature on the product. This is super important for us selling extraordinary objects of this calibre."

Rolls-Royce has increased options for bespoke cars such as the Phantom (US\$450,000 base price), which can include a clear gallery-style box set inside the dashboard, each one customised to showcase individual collections of objet d'art such as pricey mechanical watches, rare stamps or Faberge eggs.

With the US\$325,000 Cullinan, new this year with seating for up to seven, the SUV was designed with extra amenities that beg to be customised: rear work stations trimmed in exotic wood, deep-pile cashmere carpeting, and spots for Champagne coolers, picnic baskets and cigar humidors. The more space you have to work with, the more you can customise – and the more money the company can make.

For example, a picnic hamper costs US\$46,000, while a 9-carat gold-plated Spirit of Ecstasy hood



The Rolls-Royce Cullinan sport utility vehicle (SUV) was designed with extra amenities that beg to be customised: rear work stations trimmed in exotic wood, deep-pile cashmere carpeting, and spots for Champagne coolers, picnic baskets and cigar humidors. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ornament costs US\$17,000. Add in man-hours on more complicated extras, such as custom woodwork, and prices go up from there.

While the Dawn was the brand's best-seller last year in the United States, look for the V12 Cullinan to surpass it this year, said Mr Muller-Otvos.

"Cullinan will come into real play in 2019," he said. "We are already sitting on a very strong order bank."

Cullinan is conquering buyers who might be tempted to buy Bentley's Bentayga (US\$200,000) or Lamborghini's Urus (US\$200,000) instead. More than half of the people who have ordered a Cullinan are new to the brand. Rolls-Royce's official stance is that it stands alone in this rarefied space: "Bentley is not a competitor," Mr Muller-Otvos said.

Bentley Motors, for its part, has gained stature in some circles since Cullinan made its debut. Early reviews of the Bentayga were mixed, with critical jabs taken at its Audi-like body and soft drivetrain.

But during a conversation at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

car show, Bentley chairman Adrian Hallmark said he felt "very good" about the Bentayga after seeing Cullinan's debut.

"We are in fantastic position," he said, referring to how the boxy and bigger Cullinan looked. The implication was that the new, more expensive offering from Rolls-Royce made Bentley's SUV, which had debuted first, look good.

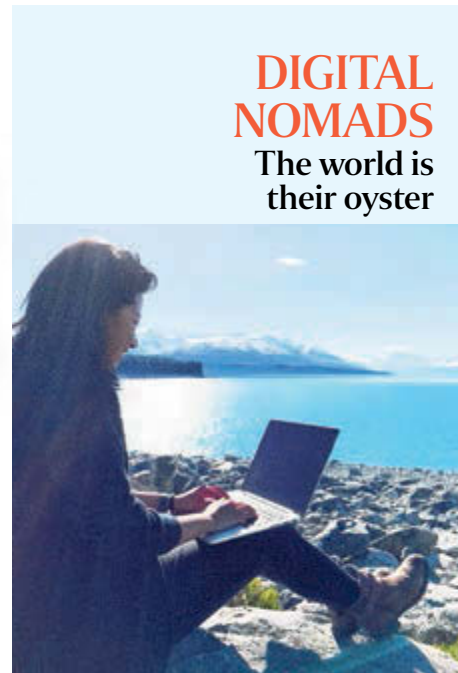
Indeed, Instagram commenters and other critics had seemingly moved on from beating up Bentayga in favour of Cullinan, which in photos can look like a gilded Mack truck.

Big, expensive vehicles are easy targets, after all. They tend to photograph poorly and draw the most ire from environment- and class-minded critics who decry conspicuous consumption. But they continue to be the primary money-makers for Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Lamborghini, and every other auto maker who makes a six-figure SUV, and even more so when they are bespoke.

Never mind the gas-thirsty drivetrain. It is very much besides the point. BLOOMBERG

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The Mercedes C180 is equipped with a 1.6-litre turbo producing 156hp and 250Nm of torque and a nine-speed transmission. PHOTOS: KEVIN LIM

No sea change for C-class

Mercedes' facelifted C180 remains a strong contender in the premium compact sedan arena

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

Minor cosmetic tweaks and a host of new on-board features and performance enhancements – that sums up what car manufacturers do to give their models a mid-life uplift.

Mercedes-Benz is no exception, going by the refreshed C-class.

The current generation C-class stands out for its striking good looks. Hence, there's no need to fix something that ain't broke.

So, besides a sportier front section which makes the model more aggressive-looking, as well as LED lighting all round, there is little to distinguish the facelift from the original.

The test-car is an entry-level C180 variant, equipped with a familiar 1.6-litre turbo producing 156hp and 250Nm of torque. But instead of a seven-speed transmission, it is

now paired with a nine-speeder. There are five drive modes to choose from too.

As a result, it makes a swifter sprint to 100kmh, clocking 8.3 seconds in the dash, instead of the pre-facelift's 8.8.

At the wheel, the C180 does not exactly have the oomph to go with its sportier styling. It is leisurely and requires a heavy foot to get it up to a gallop. It is not a laggard, but neither can it be described as sporty.

The sedan has a more pliant ride than the coupe version. But the car's chassis is still up for enthusiastic driving, even if its powertrain does not exactly inspire that.

But that is quite all right, really. A Mercedes sedan has always put cushy progress as a priority, and in that sense, the C180 meets the mark for a compact four-door.

What is a bit of letdown is its efficiency, or lack of. You would expect an engine with a modest displacement to offer economy, but the test-car averages 11 litres/100km, versus the company's declared 6.6 litres/100km.

A few sharp edges mar an otherwise well-finished interior.

Mercedes' new steering wheel sits proudly at the helm, with its suite of thumb-operated controls for functions such as auto cruise,

trip computer and hi-fi.

Although a departure from what the brand has relied on for decades, it is likely to appeal to younger customers. Here, the sensor pad is a little too sensitive. So you will often scroll to another radio station unintentionally.

The car's familiar brake-operated Hold function is intact, though.

The C180 is equipped with a 12.3-inch digital instrument display that comes with choice of display styles, a 10.25-inch infotainment screen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, and 64-colour cabin ambient lighting.

You can now channel whatever you have on your phone through the system, including navigation. That is a good thing because the recent Merces have nav systems that are unwieldy to access.

The car also comes with a motorised boot lid. That seems a little extravagant, given how small, light and low the boot lid is. Motorised tailgates are necessary only for big vehicles such as sport utility vehicles or multi-purpose vehicles.

If you are looking to buy a premium compact sedan, the C180 is certainly a viable contender. But you might also want to check out BMW's new 3-series before deciding.

christan@sph.com.sg



The facelifted C180 comes with a 12.3-inch digital instrument display, a 10.25-inch infotainment screen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, and 64-colour cabin ambient lighting.

SPECS / MERCEDES-BENZ C180 EXCLUSIVE	
Price:	\$186,888 with COE
Engine:	1,595cc 16-valve inline-4 turbocharged
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More show than go



The Mercedes-Benz C180 Coupe has sharp and quick-responding steering. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

SPECS / MERCEDES-BENZ C180 COUPE

Price:	\$193,888 with COE
Engine:	1,595cc 16-valve inline-4 turbocharged
Transmission:	Nine-speed automatic with paddle shift
Power:	156hp at 5,300rpm
Torque:	250Nm at 1,200-4,400rpm
0-100kmh:	8.5 seconds
Top speed:	226kmh
Fuel consumption:	6.7 litres/100km
Agent:	Cycle & Carriage

Mercedes' C180 Coupe is a sleek and gorgeous two-door with pedestrian performance

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

Car-makers seem to feel obliged to make their two-doors a little sportier than their four-door siblings. Sometimes, it works. Other times, it is a needless endeavour. The latest Mercedes-Benz C-class Coupe might be one example of the latter. The test-car is a C180 Coupe, which has the same drivetrain as its C180 sedan sibling. But ironically, it is less fun to drive than the four-door. It is a tad slower to the century mark, clocking 8.5 seconds versus the sedan's 8.3. Its peak velocity is 1kmh higher at 226kmh. Hardly the stuff you would have sweaty palms over.

To make matters worse, the coupe has a hard suspension and damping settings which do not respond well to, among other things, sharp turns. A hard suspension may be suitable for a car with an adrenaline-pumping performance, but for this car, it just comes across like boxing gloves on a stick figure. To its credit, the two-door has sharp and quick-responding steering. But every quick turn you execute often comes with unpleasant after-shocks. Its dampers do not mitigate sideways rocking movements very well.

On the throttle, the C180 Coupe requires more cajoling than the sedan. More often than not, you will need to rev past 3,000rpm to accomplish things you can do with 2,000rpm in other cars. It might have been acceptable if the car made a nice sound. But it does not.

As such, it would have been far better for Mercedes to tune the car for all-round comfort. Forget about performance. Because folks who gravitate towards this car are more likely to do so because of its status and styling, above all else.

On that score, the C180 Coupe does very well. It is a gorgeous creation, with smooth flowing lines and a silhouette possible only with two doors.

Like its sedan sibling, the coupe has a well-furnished interior.

You will not miss its new steering wheel, which comes with thumb-operated controls for functions such as auto cruise, trip computer and sound system.

Like in many other cars, you can open the boot with a kicking action. And like in many other cars, it does not always work well, often requiring several attempts.

The C180 Coupe comes with a 12.3-inch digital instrument panel with selectable display styles, a 10.25-inch infotainment screen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, and 64-colour cabin ambient lighting.

There was no chance to try out the car's navigation system because the SD card required for the system to work is not included (a cost option).

Illuminated door sill panels give the two-door added cachet, setting it apart from the four-door.

Noteworthy are the automatic seatbelt extenders and front seats, which are easy to move out of the way for rear occupants and which return to their set positions without fiddling.

In the final analysis, the C180 Coupe is more show than go. And there is nothing wrong with that per se because the car is quite captivating visually.

If only it did not pretend to be what it is not.

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MeAndMyCar

Car fan's spicy Korean drive

Paul Goh is taken with the Hyundai i30N's sharp handling, powerful engine and sporty ride

Edric Pan

At first glance, Paul Goh's shiny black Hyundai may pass off as an ordinary i30 hatchback. But do not be deceived.

Visual clues such as subtle red piping on the front splitter and rear diffuser, 18-inch rims and lowered suspension are hints that this is not a 1.4-litre i30, but is instead its recently launched high-performance sibling, the turbocharged 2-litre 247bhp i30N, which is retailing for about \$146,000.

Mr Goh, a 46-year-old business development manager with a global logistics company, is one of the first local buyers of the i30N.

For him, the car is ideal, meeting his need for a reliable, practical family car – he is married with a five-year-old daughter – while also satiating his desire for something fast and thrilling.

He is no stranger to performance cars, having previously owned, among others, a Fiat Uno Turbo, a Suzuki Swift GTI and an FD2R Honda Civic Type R.

Previously, he had tried his hand at grassroots motorsport and participated in events such as carpark rallies and sprints.

Having returned to Singapore in October last year after a three-year stint in Jakarta, Mr Goh immediately went car-hunting.

Fortuitously, his return coincided with a period of declining certificate of entitlement premiums, so cars had become relatively cheaper.

He was spoilt for choice. Among the cars he considered were the



Mr Paul Goh, with wife Gwen and daughter Rachel, is drawn to the fact that the Hyundai i30N has a manual gearbox, which he finds more fun to use than an autobox. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF PAUL GOH, VINCENT NG

BMW X1, Mercedes-Benz GLA, Audi Q2, Mini Clubman, Honda Civic Type R, Volkswagen Golf GTI, Volvo XC40 and Skoda Octavia RS245.

However, as soon as he test-drove the i30N, he was smitten and placed an order within minutes.

So what made him choose a Hyundai when the same budget could have bought him something with a more "premium" badge?

The car enthusiast says that he was partly influenced by a petrol-head buddy who persuaded him that the i30N was special and that he ought to try it.

And indeed, during the test-drive, Mr Goh was thrilled by the car's sharp handling, powerful en-

gine and sporty ride.

He is also drawn to the fact that, unlike most other cars these days, the i30N has a manual gearbox, which is more fun to use than an autobox and also less trouble-prone in the long term.

He adds that the i30N is great value and that "at this price point, I get a lot of car compared with an entry-level BMW or Mercedes".

He took delivery of the car only early this month and is already singing its praises.

Being in sales, he spends a lot of time on the road. He says he enjoys the Hyundai's storming performance and its comfortable, well-equipped cabin.

And it being a new and, so far, rare model, "the car also makes for a good talking point with clients, especially those in the auto or industrial sectors".

His wife, Gwen, uses the car on weekends, mainly to attend church choir practice and to take their daughter for swimming lessons.

As an early adopter of Hyundai's first hot hatch, Mr Goh is having an absolute blast.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• The writer contributes to Torque, a motoring monthly published by SPH Magazines.



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JOYCE MSUYA
UN OFFICIAL SAYS CITIES ARE HEART OF SOLUTION TO WASTE CRISIS **B4**

Bicentennial activities set to kick off

Year-long commemorative exercise to start along Singapore River and come to a close at Marina Bay

Melody Zaccheus
Heritage and Community Correspondent

Unlike SG50, the bicentennial is quite a mouthful as a word and as a concept, not as easy to grasp, acknowledges Mr Gene Tan, the person in charge of Singapore's year-long commemorative exercise.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday at a preview of the upcoming launch of bicentennial activities – set to take place on Monday – Mr Tan admitted he and his team were even worried that no one would be interested in the bicentennial and “that no one is going to talk about it”.

But it has created a buzz, with on-going conversations surrounding colonisation and the true role Sir Stamford Raffles played.

Mr Tan explained the rationale behind commemorating 1819, the year the British arrived in Singapore, while giving an overview of the year-long programme. He said the year stands as a factual marker

in time for people to have a conversation on what it means for pre-colonial, colonial and independent Singapore.

For example, the bicentennial exercise will look at regional and global developments in the past 500 years which set the context for British interest in Singapore and their subsequent arrival that year. “Raffles did not discover Singapore on his own. It (the bicentennial exercise) is almost like understanding the genesis of that moment called 1819.”

Mr Tan shared some of the activities the public can expect.

He said they start along the Singapore River “to understand where we began”, and closes at Marina Bay “to see where we will be going”.

In the Civic District, bridges are transformed by light installations, which will be fully lit by Monday.

Brightly lit words – “Where do stories begin” and on the other side “Where do stories end” – will be emblazoned across Cavenagh Bridge

S'PORE'S HISTORY continued on B2



ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Time Rhythm

WHAT: A gigantic “light metronome”, featuring light projections set to music, will be on display at i Light Singapore - Bicentennial Edition, a sustainable light art festival that runs from Monday to Feb 24. Time Rhythm – one of more than 30 artworks on display for the festival – was conceived by Spanish artist Xavi Bove and Barcelona-based multidisciplinary studio Onionlab.
WHERE: Anderson Bridge



PERSONAL VIEW OF HISTORY

It is not about having the entire country saying the same thing about the bicentennial but it is about everyone developing their own points of view about what their history is.



MR GEN TAN (above), the person in charge of Singapore's year-long commemorative exercise for the bicentennial.



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Journey through time on S'pore bridges

i Light festival features over 30 light art installations, multimedia show by artists from 15 countries

Toh Wen Li

A human figure “leaps” across the Singapore River in an art installation inspired by the island state’s rapid development.

“I’ve always seen Singapore as fast-running and jumping into the future,” says Turin-born artist Angelo Bonello, who created a series of LED figures in different stages of a leap, which come aglow in succession.

His artwork, Run Beyond, has been installed on Elgin Bridge – one of six bridges on the Singapore River and in the Marina Bay area that will be decked with light art installations during the i Light festival, an annual sustainable light art festival.

The i Light Singapore – Bicentennial Edition runs this year from Monday to Feb 24 and kicks off island-wide bicentennial activities to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles, the founder of modern Singapore.

In keeping with the festival’s theme Bridges Of Time, light art installations will be on display at the Esplanade Bridge, Elgin Bridge, Cavenagh Bridge, Anderson Bridge, Jubilee Bridge and Helix Bridge.

At Jubilee Bridge, hundreds of vertical flags will be illuminated by kaleidoscopic lighting, and on the ground below Esplanade Bridge, information relating to Singapore and the world – ranging from population figures to the number of e-mails sent – will be projected in real time.

Over at Anderson Bridge near Fullerton Hotel, a gigantic “light metronome” installation called Time Rhythm will feature light projections set to music.

Festival director Jason Chen, Urban Redevelopment Authority director for place management, said “connection” was a key motif for the festival, which has over 30 light art installations and a multimedia show. They are created by artists from 15 countries, including Singapore.

“This connection is about how we have seen people coming to Singapore before 1819 and after 1819, forming communities... and how these individuals were able to prosper in Singapore, setting up their homes here. They also reached out to the world and the region,” he said. The theme Bridges Of Time helps convey this.

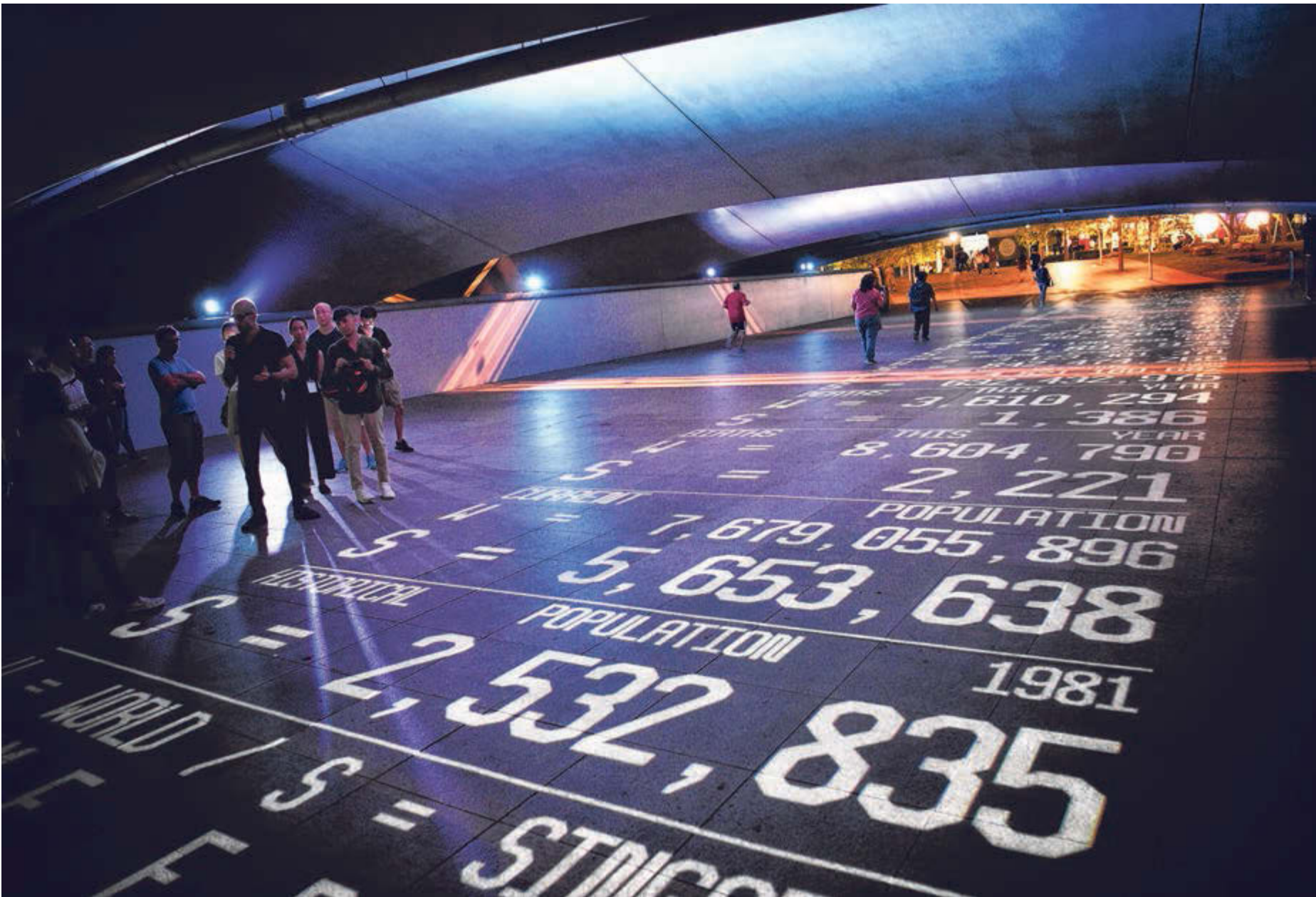
Installed on Cavenagh Bridge is the artwork Where Do Stories Begin/Where Do Stories End, by Singapore artist Michael Lee and interdisciplinary art duo Perception3.

The words “Where Do Stories Begin”, in LED neon lights on one side of the bridge, can be seen against a view of Boat Quay, which was the first stretch of the Singapore River to be developed. Meanwhile, “Where Do Stories End” appears on the other side of the bridge with Marina Bay Sands as its backdrop.

Perception3 artist Regina De Rozario said: “One of the key themes we were interested in was the idea of narratives, and how layered narratives are... not just historical narratives, but personal ones.”

tohwenli@sph.com.sg

Take part in the guided and self-guided tours during i Light Singapore and view the artworks on foot and by boat. Go to www.ilightsingapore.sg/Discover/Light-Tours for more info.



ST PHOTOS: ARIFFIN JAMAR



Time Frame (above)

WHAT: Information relating to Singapore and the world – ranging from population figures to the number of e-mails sent – will be projected in real time onto the ground below Esplanade Bridge, in this installation by the Netherlands-based multidisciplinary studio Donis.

WHERE: Esplanade Bridge

Oriflammes (left)

WHAT: Hundreds of vertical flags flap in the breeze while illuminated by kaleidoscopic lighting. It is the creation of French artist Sebastien Lefevre.

WHERE: Jubilee Bridge

The Time Vortex (left, centre)

WHAT: Pedestrians on the bridge will be surrounded by lights whizzing through “space” in this installation – conceived by the Netherlands-based design duo Paul Vendel and Sandra de Wolf – which plays with the idea of time travel.

WHERE: Helix Bridge

Run Beyond (left, below)

WHAT: A human figure takes a bold leap across the Singapore River in this installation by Turin-born artist Angelo Bonello as a series of LED figures come aglow in succession.

WHERE: Elgin Bridge

Where Do Stories Begin / Where Do Stories End

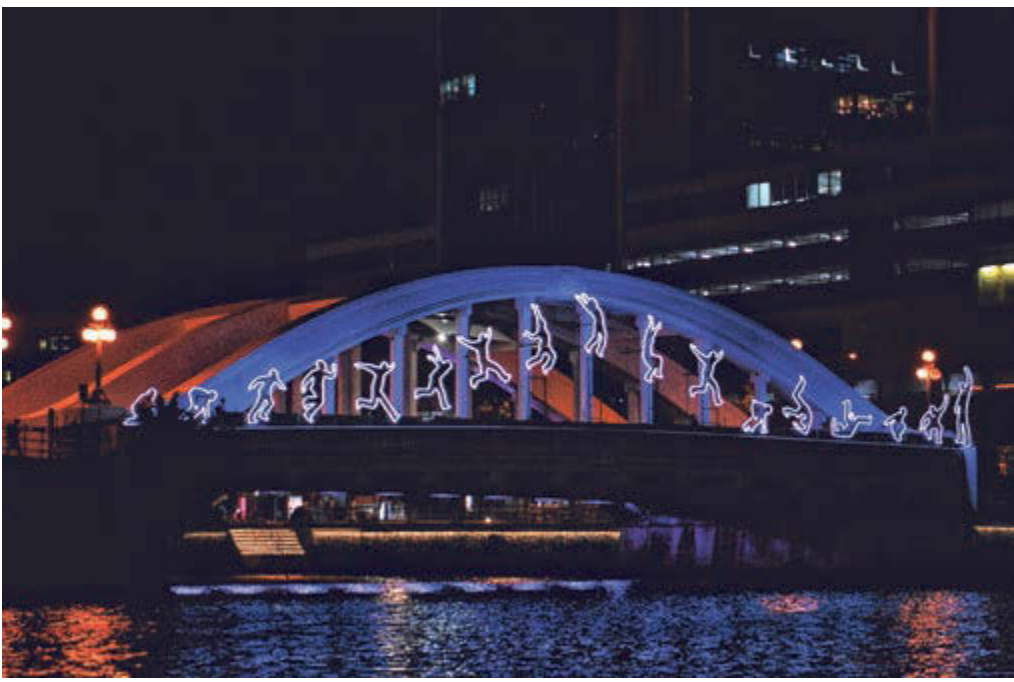
(below)

WHAT: LED neon lights on the two sides of the bridge ask the questions “Where Do Stories Begin” and “Where Do Stories End” in this installation by Singapore artist Michael Lee and interdisciplinary art duo Perception3. The words “Where Do Stories Begin” appear against the backdrop of Boat Quay – the first stretch of the Singapore River to be developed – while “Where Do Stories End” can be seen in front of Marina Bay Sands.

WHERE: Cavenagh Bridge



ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE



What to see at i Light Singapore



SCAN TO WATCH



<http://str.sg/ilight>

Telling Singapore’s history outside of textbooks

FROM B1

as part of the bicentennial edition of i Light Singapore.

Around the Civic District, artists will project images conveying interpretations of the country’s past onto the facade of national monuments as part of the bicentennial leg of the Light To Night festival. In a projection called The Resident, a kaleidoscope of natural history drawings of flora and fauna from Major-General William Farquhar’s collection will be projected onto the Supreme Court Wing facade of

the National Gallery Singapore. There is also a new Augmented Reality trail by the National Heritage Board. Community-based projects will be rolled out starting next month. These include projects such as new heritage galleries, a graphic novel

and even a trivia night.

The blockbuster event for the year will be The Bicentennial Experience at Fort Canning Centre, where 700 years of history will be told through sets, live performances and the use of multimedia. It will run from June to mid-September.

Therefore, the year-long programme features events and projects by artists, authors, photographers, musicians, clan associations, schools and ethnic associations, among others.

Mr Tan said: “It is not about having the entire country saying the same thing about the bicentennial but it is about everyone developing their own points of view about what their history is.”

melodyz@sph.com.sg

The closing leg will be a reflective experience at Gardens by the Bay. Mr Tan did not elaborate on the plans but said: “This is the part that we might not have planned as extensively because we are actually very interested by the third quarter, of how people might have changed in terms of what they think about us, our history and our future.”

He added that the Singapore Bicentennial Office’s aim is to reach a wider public and to tell history outside of textbooks and academia.

Therefore, the year-long programme features events and projects by artists, authors, photographers, musicians, clan associations, schools and ethnic associations, among others.

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Accountant siphoned \$2m from two firms

He pleads guilty to 250 charges, including cheating, CBT and money laundering

Shaffiq Alkhatib

An accountant who siphoned more than \$2 million from two firms he was working for was found out only when the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) became aware of suspicious transactions.

Using false payment vouchers, Yeo Yong Heng, 53, deceived the man authorised to sign the companies' cheques for over six years.

The Singaporean pleaded guilty in court on Thursday to 250 charges, including cheating, criminal breach of trust and money laundering. A whopping 616 other charges will be considered during sentencing.

Yeo worked for Steel Industries from 1996 to 2013 and Malaysia-based S. I. Stainless from 2011 to 2013. One of the directors of Steel Industries, Singaporean Ong Soon Liong, also ran S. I. Stainless, the court heard. Deputy Public Prosecutor Stacey Fernandez said Steel Industries had three banks accounts with Mr Ong as its sole authorised signatory.

In 2013, CAD launched an investigation after receiving a suspicious transaction report linked to Yeo's bank, stating that at least 26 cheques issued by Steel Industries for over \$300,000 in total were deposited into his accounts between October 2012 and March that year.

He was entrusted with cheque books from the three banks and his job included preparing cheques and payment vouchers and collecting payments on behalf of Steel Industries. But between Dec 29, 2006 and June 22, 2013, he duped Mr Ong into issuing cheques from Steel Industries for purported company-related expenses and advances made by the firm to other parties.

He used cheques bearing ficti-



Using false vouchers, Yeo Yong Heng deceived the man authorised to sign cheques for two firms for over six years.

tious payments and supported his deception by showing false payment vouchers.

"Yeo thus deceived Ong into believing that the amounts stated in the cheques were for legitimate expenses incurred by, and advances to be made by Steel Industries," said DPP Fernandez. "Yeo thereby dishonestly induced Ong to authorise payments of the amounts indicated in the cheques, and to deliver these signed cheques to Yeo."

He used the same ruse on S. I. Stainless as well.

Yeo bought shares, a Toyota Wish car and two apartments – in Amber Road and Jalan Dusun near Balestier Road – with the monies. He has since made a full restitution after selling the two properties.

DPP Fernandez urged District Judge Shaiffudin Saruwan to sentence Yeo to four years' jail, adding: "Other like-minded persons should know that such blatant abuse of a position of trust, and relentless reaching into their employer's coffers to pursue personal gain, will be dealt with harshly."

Defence lawyer Vincent Yeoh pleaded for Yeo to be sentenced to a year and eight months in jail, stressing that his methods were "crude" and not difficult to detect. Yeo, who is no longer employed by the firms, is out on bail of \$40,000 and will be sentenced on Feb 13.

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Blogger seeks to strike out PM's claim in libel suit

Adrian Lim
Political Correspondent

Blogger Leong Sze Hian, who is being sued by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong for defamation, filed an application to the courts yesterday to strike out PM Lee's claim against him.

The move is the latest development in a libel suit that started last November, when PM Lee commenced legal action against Mr Leong. It is in relation to Mr Leong sharing on his Facebook page an article alleging PM Lee had helped to launder money from the IMDB Development Berhad (IMDB) fund.

In a statement yesterday, Mr Leong's lawyer, Carson Law Chambers' Mr Lim Tean, gave three reasons as grounds for the application.

Mr Lim said the claim is "scandalous, frivolous or vexatious", "may prejudice, embarrass or delay the fair trial of the action", and is "an abuse of the process of the court". He noted that Mr Leong has also filed an affidavit in support of the application.

He also said that he believes the application will be heard in court on Feb 25, together with a separate application made by PM Lee's lawyers to strike out a counterclaim made earlier by Mr Leong.

Late last month, Mr Leong responded to PM Lee's initial legal action by filing his defence and a countersuit in which he stated the defamation claim was an abuse of the court process, and that what he did – by sharing the article about PM Lee – was no more than what thousands of others had done.

Lawyers for PM Lee responded by making an application earlier

this month to strike out the counterclaim. PM Lee's press secretary Chang Li Lin said then that it was made on the ground that the counterclaim "has no basis in law and is completely hopeless".

The libel suit centres on an article published by Malaysian news portal The Coverage, and which Mr Leong shared a link to on his Facebook page on Nov 7, together with part of the headline.

Titled "Breaking News: Singapore Lee Hsien Loong Becomes IMDB's Key Investigation Target – Najib Signed Several Unfair Agreements With Hsien Loong In Exchange For Money Laundering", the article alleged that former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak had signed "secret deals" with PM Lee in exchange for Singapore banks' help in laundering money from IMDB.

On Nov 10, Mr Leong took down his Facebook post, after being told to do so by regulator Infocomm Media Development Authority.

PM Lee's lawyers had said the article's allegations were "false and baseless", and that it was clear Mr Leong had published the post "maliciously and to damage our client".

In his defence, Mr Leong denied, among other things, that he was being malicious.

PM Lee is seeking aggravated damages as well as costs, plus an injunction that Mr Leong be prevented from publishing or disseminating the defamatory allegations, or any other allegations of complicity in matters relating to IMDB.

A first pre-trial conference for the case took place on Jan 21, with a second one to be held on Jan 31.

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4,000 sign petition over SMC ruling

They want minister to examine decision after doctor was fined \$100k in disciplinary case

Salma Khalik
Senior Health Correspondent

Disquiet over a recent disciplinary ruling by a Singapore Medical Council (SMC) tribunal has prompted more than 4,000 people, many of whom are doctors, to sign a petition to Health Minister Gan Kim Yong.

The ruling imposed a \$100,000 fine on Dr Lim Lian Arn for not telling his patient about possible side effects from a commonly used injection. The side effects usually last one to two days.

The petitioners are concerned that the ruling could fundamentally change the way medicine is practised here by imposing a significant additional burden on doctors that will in turn increase the time and

cost of treatment. The petition asks that the Health Minister examine the ruling and clarify issues that it has generated.

Their concerns are based on a point raised during Dr Lim's disciplinary hearing: that the "majority of the medical professionals performing these injections do not routinely take or document a detailed informed consent".

The petition said: "For every procedure, there are complications that the practitioner, up to now, would have felt were too minor or uncommon to warrant informing the patient."

"Every drug prescribed has a long list of potential side effects. A doctor having to go through each and every one of them would take a very long time, especially with patients

on many tablets."

The SMC tribunal had found no fault with the treatment, describing it as appropriate.

But it said Dr Lim should have informed the patient of possible side effects so she could decide whether to have the jab or not.

Dr Lim had pleaded guilty and asked for a \$100,000 fine or a three-month suspension. The SMC asked for a five-month suspension.

The petition said: "This ruling has grave implications on how medicine is practised. If patients need to be informed of even the most minor or uncommon side effects of treatment, then the cost and time of treatment must necessarily increase."

Dr Tho Kam San, an orthopaedic surgeon in private practice who launched the petition on Thursday, said the purpose is not to overturn the judgment but to seek clarity for doctors.

He told The Straits Times that if

the minister says doctors must tell patients about all possible side effects of all treatments, then they will comply, but it will mean spending a lot more time with each patient. And that will have ramifications for how medicine is practised.

Gastroenterologist Desmond Wai had written to The Straits Times Forum pages saying that traditionally, doctors were told to inform patients of serious side effects.

"If every possible complication of a medication or procedure has to be explained to patients, it will be extremely difficult to practise medicine," he said, giving the example of paracetamol, which is used so frequently that doctors do not highlight the side effects.

He said "the major and common side effects of paracetamol are mainly drug allergy and liver toxicity, if taken in large quantities. But paracetamol is also associated with more than 20 other potential adverse effects, including insomnia

and headaches".

Obstetrician Lawrence Ang said: "We filter and reveal what we deem are pertinent. It goes back to our judgment and experience, acquired from our years of clinical practice."

A lawyer versed in medical litigation said Dr Lim "might potentially have had a viable defence to the charge against him".

Ms Kuah Boon Theng of Legal Clinic LLC said "a doctor is only considered negligent if he failed to disclose information which would be considered relevant and material to the patient".

What makes a risk sufficiently material depends on the likelihood and severity of the side effects, she said. The tribunal said the side effects were "limited in nature and extent".

But she added: "Having said that, contesting the charges means going through a painful and often protracted process."

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DIFFICULT TO PRACTISE MEDICINE

If every possible complication of a medication or procedure has to be explained to patients, it will be extremely difficult to practise medicine.

”

GASTROENTEROLOGIST DESMOND WAI

Mendaki, Muis, Mesra open joint office for collaborative support

Rahimah Rashith

As part of efforts for greater coordination, Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli launched yesterday a joint office in Wisma Geylang Serai that will facilitate support given to the community by three key Malay/Muslim organisations.

Popularly known as M³, it is made up of self-help group Mendaki, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) and the People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council (Mesra).

The M³ initiative aims to allow the three organisations, housed under one roof, to collaborate with each other and with other government agencies to improve support for the community.

At the launch, Mr Masagos said: "The most important thing is that the public are not pushed from door to door when they come here. We believe there is no wrong door policy. Staff of each organisation have been briefed that they will own the clients until the clients find the help that they need."

The idea was first mooted by Mr Masagos, who is also Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, at his inaugural Minister's Hari Raya gathering last year. It was also highlighted by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at last year's National Day Rally when he noted the Government's aim to combine the resources and volunteers of the various agencies.

In its first collaboration in September last year, the initiative rolled out a free educational programme to help students with mathematics skills, encourage creativity and strengthen family bonds.

While the new joint office is run by Muis and Mendaki, Mesra will be involved in coordinating support and programmes for the community under the initiative.

All three also aim to extend its outreach to the heartland.

This is Muis' first external office, while Mendaki has several centres across the island.

The joint office will also work with eight Malay-Muslim organisations, including the Association of Muslim Professionals, the Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious



(Standing from left) Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of State for National Development and Manpower Zaqq Mohamad, MUIS chief executive Esa Masood and Senior Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Maliki Osman with pre-schoolers who are part of a Mendaki reading programme. Mr Masagos, who launched the joint office at Wisma Geylang Serai, said "the most important thing is that the public are not pushed from door to door". ST PHOTO: KHALID BABA

Teachers Association (Pergas) and Berita Harian newspaper.

They will be housed in Wisma Geylang Serai under a one-stop service centre called Kurnia@WGS.

Muis volunteer Siti Khatijah

Haron, 39, looks forward to the collaborative efforts. "The joint initiative makes it easier for volunteers to refer a beneficiary who needs various services under different organisations to a suitable agency."

Starting yesterday and continuing until tomorrow, the cultural and community hub Wisma Geylang Serai is celebrating its opening by hosting a festival called Geylang Serai: Past, Present, Future to show-

case the Malay community's arts, culture and lifestyle. There will also be outdoor multimedia displays, festive bazaars and fireworks.

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NOTICES

Remittance vouchers that serve as loans?

Shop appears to get around new rules with scheme that lets maids send money home

Joyce Lim
Senior Correspondent

It started with a \$500 loan from a licensed moneylender, but it soon spiralled into a \$1,700 debt Filipino maid Marimar just did not know how to manage.

The money was for family members back home who were sick.

Marimar, who wanted to be identified by her nickname, said that over a six-month period, she had to borrow from different licensed moneylenders to settle her original debt because she kept missing repayments.

But when tighter borrowing rules kicked in on Nov 30 last year, the 40-year-old was stuck.

She was already using all \$700 from her monthly salary to repay her debt. Marimar did not have enough money to send home.

Under the new regulations, foreigners earning less than \$10,000 a year here can borrow up to only \$1,500 from all licensed moneylenders combined. This comes amid concerns over a sharp increase in the number of maids taking out loans and getting into debt.

With her \$1,700 debt, Marimar could not borrow any more.

So when she heard Kata Store, a cellphone retailer at Lucky Plaza, sold remittance vouchers, she thought she was thrown a lifeline.

Marimar told The Straits Times: "My friend told me that I could take a loan from Kata in the form of a remittance voucher and I thought, 'why not?'"

On Dec 16 last year, she bought a \$700 remittance voucher. Marimar had to pay an upfront fee of \$102.

She was then required to pay \$153 a month over five months; and \$148 in the sixth month. In total, she would have ended up paying \$1,015 – 45 per cent more than the \$700 she sent back to her family.

The Straits Times saw Marimar's instalment repayment details printed on a receipt. It stated that an administrative charge of \$2 a day would be imposed if payment is not received on the due date.

After buying the voucher, Marimar went to remittance agency Brunphil Express on the second level of the same mall to have the money sent to the Philippines.

"I needed to show the staff at Brunphil my purchase receipt and the staff helped to remit \$700 to the Philippines," said Marimar.

Last month, The Straits Times spoke to a manager at Brunphil Express – which holds a remittance licence issued by the Monetary Authority of Singapore – who confirmed the collaboration with Kata.

The manager, who wanted to be known only as Ms Chie, said: "We will help to remit the money first and collect the money from Kata at the end of the day."

She declined to reveal how much Brunphil has remitted through its collaboration with Kata, but said the vouchers were very popular with maids. "It's Kata's promotion. We just help to remit the money. We don't sell the vouchers."

Yesterday, more than a dozen officers from the police's unlicensed-moneylending unit raided all three Kata outlets at the mall and the single Brunphil Express unit. Kata is not a licensed moneylender.

A banking professional whose maid bought a remittance voucher from Kata questioned the legality of cellphone retailers offering loans.

"They will say it's an instalment plan and it appears legal, but these are shops licensed to sell hand-phones, not remittance vouchers," said the man, who asked not to be named.

A maid who spoke on the condition of anonymity said that to buy the remittance voucher, maids had to provide Kata with two contact numbers – one of which has to be that of a family member or friend living in the Philippines. The other can be of a friend based in Singapore.

The maids also needed to provide a copy of their work permit and sign an agreement form.

Some later went to Pastor Billy Lee, executive director and founder of Blessed Grace Social Services, for help. Said Pastor Lee: "These are clearly loans to maids disguised as instalment plans for purchases of goods."

Last month, he took some of them to make a police report against Kata. Kata's owner could not be reached for comment.

Lawyer Chia Boon Teck of Chia

Wong law firm said moneylending contracts that are deemed illegal are not enforceable in court if the borrower defaults on payments.

"When illegal moneylenders have no legal recourse to recover the loans, other like-minded law break-

ers will watch and learn not to do such things," he added.

It was revealed in Parliament last November that 28,000 maids borrowed from licensed moneylenders in the first six months of last year.

This is more than double the 12,000 who did so in the whole of 2017. In 2016, there were just 1,500 maids who took out such loans.

joycel@sph.com.sg



Police officers carrying out a raid on one of cellphone retailer Kata Store's three shops at Lucky Plaza yesterday. Kata, which is not a licensed moneylender, has a tie-up with remittance agency Brunphil Express. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG

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Record 11m attended free arts events in 2017

But 20% increase did not translate into similar spike in ticket sales, which grew 5%



A Bukit Pasoh street party held in conjunction with the Singapore Heritage Festival. The festival is among major free events meant to allow heartlanders who do not go to performance halls to also enjoy arts and cultural events, says Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu. PHOTO: SINGAPORE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Akshita Nanda
Arts Correspondent

Attendance at free arts events rose to an all-time high in 2017, but ticket sales did not shoot up in tandem, data released by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) on Tuesday showed.

More than 11 million attended non-ticketed arts and cultural events in 2017, a rise of nearly 20 per cent from the year before.

However, only 1.9 million bought tickets to performing arts events in 2017, about 5 per cent more than the 1.8 million reported in 2016.

In addition, ticketed attendance has fallen from the seven-year high of 2.3 million reported in 2011.

The jump in attendance at free events could be the result of larger numbers of performing arts events offered over the years – from around 7,700 in 2011 to 9,010 in 2016, and more than 9,500 in 2017.

More details will be released at the end of the month in the Singapore Cultural Statistics report.

Asked whether free events were making it more challenging for arts and cultural groups to get audiences

to buy tickets to their performances, Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, said that it was “a balancing act” for her ministry between ensuring that Singaporeans of all income levels get to enjoy arts and cultural performances, and supporting arts groups.

“We have to take a balanced view because arts to us is not restricted to just performances in performing halls. We are also very keen to allow heartlanders, people who are not coming to performance halls, to also enjoy art.”

Major free events such as the Singapore Night Festival and Singapore Heritage Festival are meant to cater to such audiences and “build up the next group of audiences”, she added.

“It should not just be the same people going to more performances, but we hope that people who have not bought a ticket to a performance will start doing so.”

Ms Fu spoke to the media at the MCCY Year-in-Review 2018 event on Tuesday.

Arts groups The Straits Times spoke to said the exposure from non-ticketed events might bring in

newviewers for ticketed ones.

Guzheng performer Natalie Alexandra Tse, 32, of music group SAtheCollective, said: “I do feel that audiences who came previously for our free shows during the early days at the Esplanade Outdoor Theatre did translate to a small number of audiences who like our work and therefore came for our other events.”

Composer and arranger Dayn Ng, 31, who works with many music groups, including Chinese instrumental group Musa, said free shows “solve the problem of exposure” for artists, but that some locations are more helpful than others.

Non-ticketed shows during festivals at the Esplanade – Theatres On The Bay are good for the group’s “branding”, he said, since these shows are associated with a major performing arts centre.

He thinks more viewers might consider ticketed shows if given a Culture Pass mobile app with sponsored “credits” to buy tickets for arts and culture events.

This idea was mooted earlier this month in Parliament by Nominated MP Terence Ho.

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Car dealers warn of two men making bogus purchases

Toh Ting Wei

At least four car showrooms in Alexandra Road were recently visited by phantom shoppers.

Two men, who looked to be in their 20s and who identified themselves as Mr Jerald Low and Mr Timothy Yeo, entered the showrooms and offered to buy cars with cheques that were later cancelled.

The failed payment in these cases went up to as high as \$800,000 in one instance.

The transactions did not proceed far enough for dealers to hand over the cars. Car dealers usually hand over a purchased car only after full payment has been received.

A Volkswagen Singapore

spokesman confirmed that the pair visited its premises at around 3pm on Jan 13. They test-drove two cars before selecting the Golf R and the Arteon models.

“At the point of purchase, the Golf R was \$201,400 and the Arteon was \$207,400,” the spokesman said. The pair made full payment for the cars with a cheque.

When the showroom tried to cash the cheque, the bank said the transaction had been stopped by the issuer. The bank is understood to be Malaysia bank CIMB.

The two men visited the Kia Alexandra showroom the next day.

Mr Brandon Tan, a sales consultant, said the men chose to buy three cars – the Stinger, the Sorento GT Line and the Cerato – valued at

more than \$400,000 in total.

The man called Mr Low wrote a cheque for \$35,000 as the initial payment, said Mr Tan.

“They didn’t even go for a test drive or attempt to negotiate the price. They just asked for three units and asked for cash payment,” he added. “I have been in the industry for 20 years, but I have never seen something like that.”

The showroom was later told the cheque had been cancelled.

The two other showrooms, which declined to be named, said the duo tried the same trick at their premises. A representative of one of these showrooms said the men visited on Jan 13 and paid for three cars with a cheque for \$800,000.

A CIMB spokesman told The Straits Times that due to banking secrecy laws, it was unable to say if it was aware of the case. ST understands that the four car showrooms have not filed any police report.

Veteran lawyer Amolat Singh said that in these cases, even if a police report is filed, it would be hard to charge the men as their actions do not fall under a clear-cut offence.

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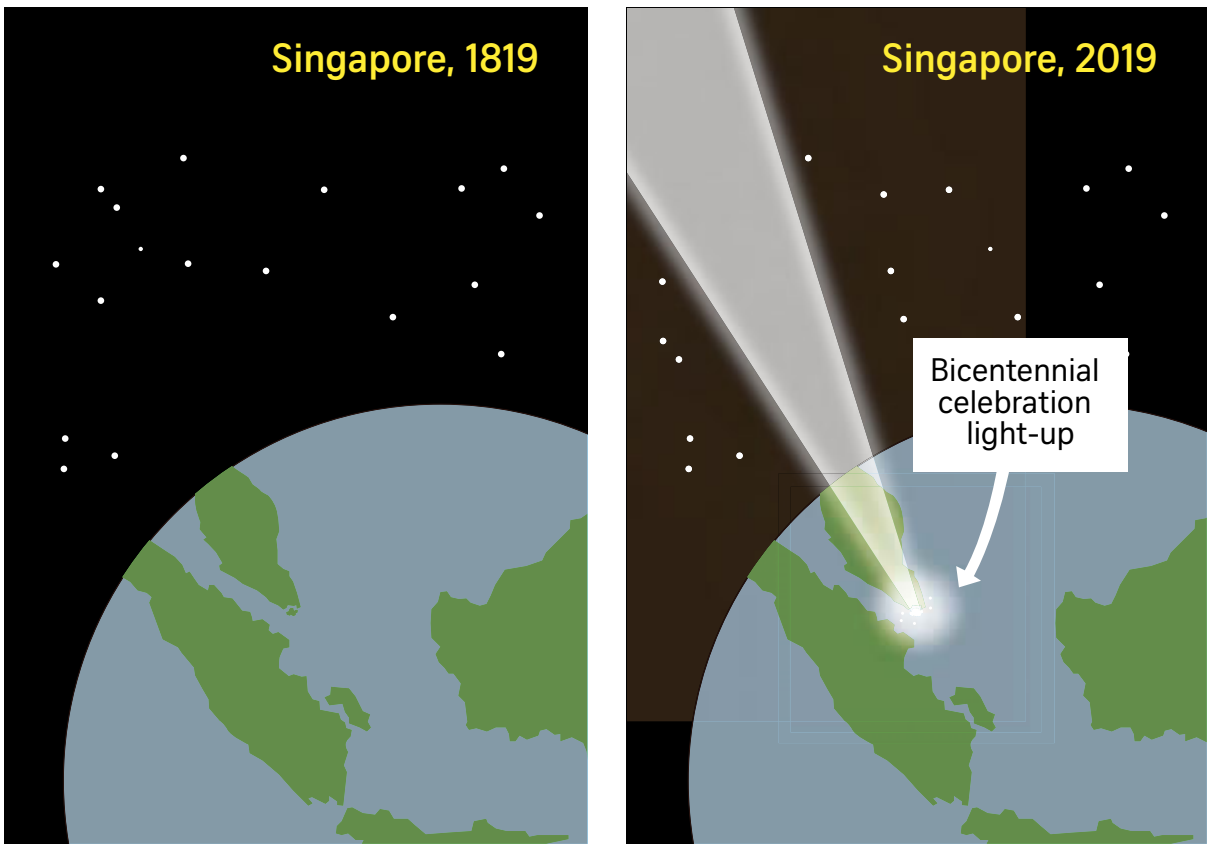
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FORUM

muel's TAKE



Deploy more independent safety observers

Reading the report on the death of another Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) soldier brought about a sense of déjà vu (SAF to study how to make further safety improvements; Jan 25).

There was the same assurance from the SAF, that it is taking a safety time-out to allow units to review safety protocols and procedures.

As a layman, I'm not convinced that this will be any different from previous reviews. Perhaps it is time for the SAF to take a stiffer approach to reviewing safety.

As I watched the Ministry of Defence's (Mindef) video showing the gun barrel lowering, it alarmed me that several people are allowed inside the small cabin while the barrel is being lowered.

I am sure that there are safety protocols on managing movement in the cabin while the barrel is being lowered, but should there even be people inside the cabin in the first place given the potential danger?

The adage "Familiarity breeds complacency" is usually the root issue in any safety lapse.

Perhaps Mindef should deploy more safety observers across the SAF who do not come from that unit, or perform that vocation, to observe all training procedures to pick up potential dangers.

More often than not, soldiers from a particular unit or vocation are so familiar with their training protocols and surroundings that they may not realise that certain procedures pose danger.

And all it takes is a momentary lapse for a fatality to happen.

A person unfamiliar with a unit or vocation will probably spot potentially dangerous situations better.

The safety observers should err on the cautious side when they make their recommendations but the commanders can make the final call whether changes in protocol will compromise operational readiness.

For example, in this case, as a casual observer, I would have asked if it were absolutely necessary for the men to be in the cabin as the barrel was being lowered, and if there should be safety bars around the area where the barrel moves downwards to reduce chances of mishaps.

Alvin Hang Woei Yau

Everyone has a part to play in safety culture

The Ministry of Defence (Mindef) for the first time said that the training tempo across all services would be lowered to review the safety protocols.

It is good that the leadership is taking steps to ensure a safe operating environment for our soldiers. After the recent training incidents, a slew of safety measures was introduced but systems can do only so much.

Being an operationally ready national serviceman (NSman) myself, my experience is that the Singapore Armed Forces has always spared no effort and resources to strengthen the safety system.

Some examples are taking individual temperatures, enforcing seven hours of rest, enforcing the wearing of seat belts, removal of mobile devices... the list goes on.

However, safety is not just about actions – it is a culture, and every soldier has a part to play to ensure that the system stays tight.

Military tasks have inherent risks, we should appreciate the men and women who are serving NS to ensure the sovereignty of our nation.

Likewise, incidents like these should serve as a reminder to all soldiers – full-time national servicemen and NSmen – that it is their duty to enforce the safety system so that they can all complete their training safely.

I trust that Mindef will conduct a thorough investigation and provide a clear conclusion to the incident.

Singaporeans expect nothing less.

Ang Deyao

Fewer words, more concrete action, please

The Chief of Army Goh Si Hou was reported to have said: "I have told all my commanders that this cannot be business as usual... I have told them we must do better, that we must do our utmost to restore confidence in our training safety and to ensure the safety of all our soldiers." (SAF to lower training tempo to review safety, processes; Jan 25).

I can see the earnest army chief exhorting his men, as any army commander would, to give such orders.

Words, words, and more words.

When was the last time someone said something similar, following a tragic accident involving national servicemen? It's déjà vu.

With due respect to the army chief, these are words that came across as superfluous.

It's too sad and too late.

I wished there were fewer words and more concrete actions, with more attention paid to details much earlier on so that death can be prevented, rather than mere words aimed at comforting the bereaved and doing damage control.

Thomas Lee Hock Seng (Dr)

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Unwelcome signal for medical fraternity

What kind of signal is the Singapore Medical Council sending out when a small lapse of not accounting for a non-major side effect of a routine, minor procedure costs a doctor an astronomical fine of \$100,000 (Doc fined \$100k for not warning patient of injection side effects; Jan 22)

It is understood that the Montgomery test for negligence, where all complications and side effects of procedures must be explained in detail to patients, now applies.

Still, patients will always deny full comprehension even when details of any procedure have been fully explained to them. It is also common for them to protest that they had not been told anything when they institute proceedings against medical personnel and institutions.

It is an area opportunistic, disgruntled patients can exploit, and where doctors will always be

held hostage.

The doctor is in a quandary as in the final analysis, it is just one person's word against another. The signing of consent for a procedure also guarantees nothing, as the Singapore courts have determined that it does not absolve the doctor of any responsibility.

It appears that for doctors to fully indemnify themselves, recordings of all consultations must be made for conclusive proof that they have satisfied the Montgomery test. Just don't be surprised if consultation times are stretched, waiting times longer and charges increased.

One really cannot blame doctors for practising defensive medicine, despite constant exhortations by the authorities for them not to do so, when they seem defenceless against a litany of suits and a non-empathetic SMC quick to find fault among its own kind in the medical fraternity.

Yik Keng Yeong (Dr)

Medical council's ruling too harsh

The Singapore Medical Council's latest action against an orthopaedic doctor in private practice is punitive and detrimental to the medical profession (Doc fined \$100k for not warning patient of injection side effects; Jan 22).

Steroid injections are the most cost-effective first-line treatment for many musculoskeletal inflammatory or repetitive strain problems.

These are routinely given daily by even the most junior trainees in orthopaedic and hand surgery. Significant adverse effects or complications are exceedingly rare.

Minor side effects are more common but still rare, resolve on their own, and are of no lasting consequence to the patient.

I cannot recall any senior surgeon routinely going through these minor side effects with every patient at any of the centres I have worked at throughout my training in Singapore, Australia and the UK.

It is, therefore, very disturbing that a senior orthopaedic surgeon has been fined \$100,000 and that the SMC's legal counsel even sought a five-month suspension for his failing to inform the patient of them.

This is too punitive and certainly not commensurate with the severity of the offence, which until now, was not even considered wrong by the vast majority of

doctors doing this procedure.

This ruling has grave implications on how medicine is practised. If patients need to be informed of even the most minor side effects of treatment, then the cost and time of treatment must necessarily increase.

Every procedure has potential complications. Every drug prescribed has a long list of potential minor side effects.

Nurses would have to go through the list of all possible complications from taking blood samples, inserting an intravenous cannula, or administering an intramuscular injection.

None of these procedures is currently done with an informed consent as detailed as the SMC's latest judgment requires, and for good reason. To do so would paralyse a busy accident and emergency unit, ward or clinic.

I urge the medical council to seriously consider the wider implications in passing its judgments. In setting impractical standards and adopting punitive sentencing for minor offences, even good doctors will fall foul, because every doctor makes honest mistakes.

This deters not just wrongdoing, but also people from entering the medical profession altogether, to society's detriment.

Andrew Yam Kean Tuck (Dr)

OnFacebook

What approach should schools and teachers take when faced with "difficult" students?

Why should the teacher be alone in the guidance and mentoring of students? It is undeniable that parents play a pivotal role in the shaping of their children's lives and education.

Kok Siong

Many times, these troubled youth do not perform well academically and lack discipline, hence they tend to be grouped into the same class. How do you expect the teacher to care for an entire class of students like that, on top of teaching duties and administrative responsibilities?

Jacq Ang

The teacher will have to decide to spend limited time and energy between those who want to learn or help themselves and those who don't and (who have) parents who are not cooperative.

Every hour spent on one group is an hour taken from another.

Muhammad Hamzah

Those "difficult" students are difficult because people around them label them as such. What they need is someone who trusts them. To believe that they are good, (that) they have talents which no one has seen.

Ivan Wong

Before you ask the teachers to do anything, make sure they are given the tools and resources to

do it. Make sure the teachers are trained and well compensated.

Dennis Lim

Should those with autism be given the opportunity to serve national service?

You need to have specialists who are suited to train them.

Fauzi Yacob

Why expose them to potential bullying?

Jo Thia

It depends on the severity of the condition. The spectrum is very wide. Those who tend to be slower in grasping instructions may end up getting bullied, but there are also some who are very intelligent and capable of socialising with others.

Keep options open, let us not be too rigid when it comes to those with special needs.

Siti Nor'aini AS

We must first understand that autism is a disorder that lies on a spectrum. As long as the individuals are deemed functional, I don't see why we should deny them the right to serve our country.

Maria Tymosiewicz

If Singapore aims to be an inclusive society, then we should provide them with the opportunity to serve in ways that best suit their skill sets.

Benjamin Chew

Persons with special needs are valuable stakeholders

We agree with Mr Christopher Loy Ki-Jin that the views of people with special needs and their caregivers should be sought when making policies.

They should also be consulted in the workplace (Don't shut out voices of those with autism; Jan 14).

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) is committed to jointly developing ideas and solutions with the disability sector.

In coming up with the recommendations in the Third Enabling Masterplan (2017-2021), more than 400 persons with special needs, their caregivers,

voluntary welfare organisations, and employers were consulted.

The steering committee which developed the masterplan also included members with special needs.

And now, we are working collectively with the community, as well as the public and private sectors to implement its recommendations.

The Government has also expanded our range of initiatives to support persons with special needs in finding employment that suits their interests and capabilities.

The Job Placement Job Support

Programme administered by SG Enable helps match individuals to suitable jobs, and provides workplace support through job coaching to ease the transition process.

To encourage inclusive hiring among more employers, the Open Door Programme provides funding for employee training, workplace modifications, job redesign and the purchase of assistive technology devices to better support persons with special needs at work.

The grants also cover training costs for fellow employees in the

workplace to help them better understand how they can support their co-workers with disabilities more effectively.

To date, both programmes have helped to place over 2,000 persons with special needs in jobs.

We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with the community and our stakeholders so that persons with special needs can achieve their fullest potential and participate actively in society.

Alvin Tan (Dr)

Director, Disability Office
Ministry of Social and Family Development

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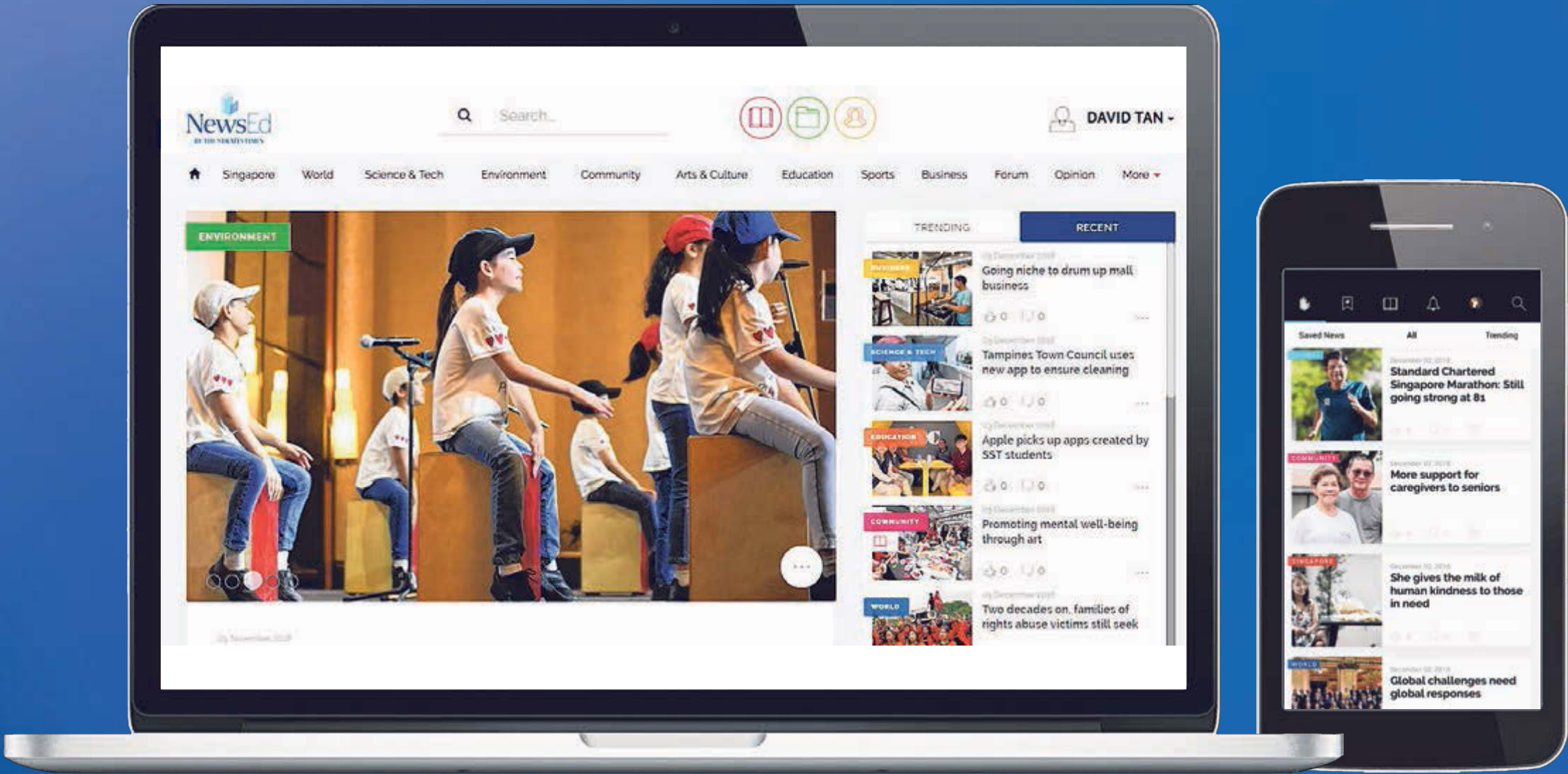
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Green respite

An aerial photo of the Singapore Botanic Gardens with the city skyline in the background, taken using a drone in 2015.

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